

268.01 L424S c.1

Lawrance, William Irvin

The social emphasis in reli

R.W.B. JACKSON LIBRARY

OISE CIR



3 0005 02065 3120

THE SOCIAL EMPHASIS
IN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
▲ ▲ ▲
WILLIAM IRVIN LAWRENCE ▲

THE LIBRARY

The Ontario Institute
for Studies in Education


Toronto, Canada



LIBRARY
THE ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
TORONTO, CANADA

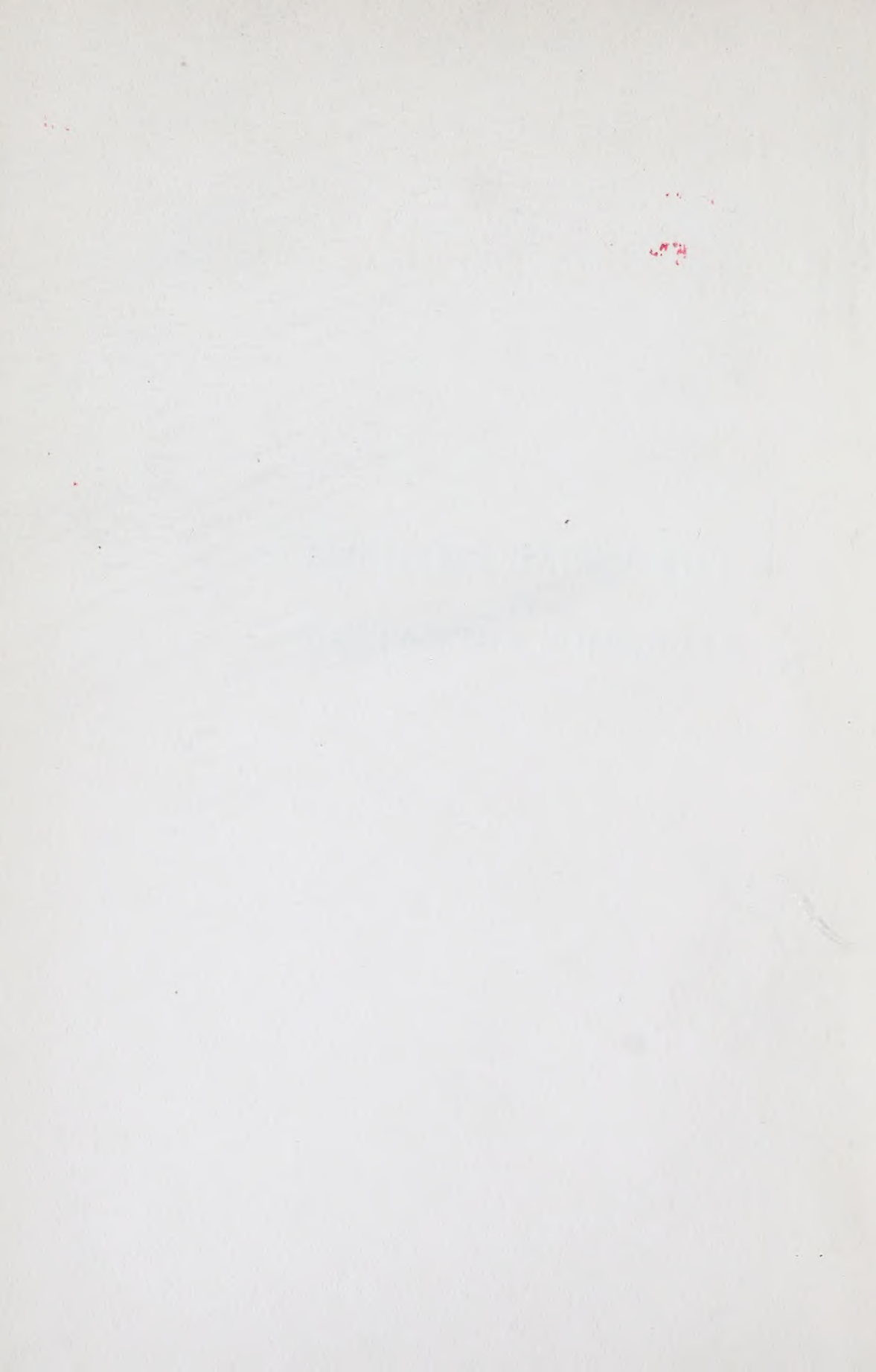
FEB 26 1968

Bennell Cole



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE SOCIAL EMPHASIS
IN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



THE SOCIAL EMPHASIS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

BY
WILLIAM IRVIN LAWRENCE, TH.D.

INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE ALBERT COE, PH.D.



THE BEACON PRESS
25 BEACON STREET
BOSTON, MASS.

Copyright, 1918, by
THE BEACON PRESS

All rights reserved

INTRODUCTION

In the reform that is now taking place in religious education certain things are fundamental, others accessory. The accessories were the first to attract popular attention. We were told that the hands of Sunday-school pupils, as well as their minds, require occupation. Teachers were urged to learn how to make a lesson plan, how to ask questions, how to tell stories. Great stress was laid upon the gradation of pupils and of lessons. All this advice is indispensable, and it is having excellent results. But there is a prior question, namely, What sort of men and women do we want our pupils to become, and therefore what principles shall control the content of our teaching?

No one can face this question intelligently without perceiving that the underlying issue concerns the part that religious education is to play in the social reconstruction that has begun to grip the conscience of the churches. Nor can any educationist proceed far with the

INTRODUCTION

socialization of aim and content in religious teaching without discovering that methods and organization also must be socialized.

The author of this essay has been for years a devoted and intelligent yokefellow of those who have dared to carry their thinking far ahead of existing practice. He has steadily labored not only for improved methods but also for the spiritualization of technique. He now offers to share with us, more fully than heretofore, his vision of ultimate aims and meanings. He beholds in human life one great meaning, fellowship, and he finds it not only in human life but also in the entire universe in which man has his little place. To socialize all our attitudes—toward inanimate nature as well as toward humanity and toward God—becomes for him the all-controlling purpose in religious education.

This point of view deserves a welcome from us all. It deserves it because we need, while we prune our various foot-hill vineyards, to be reminded of the mountain summits that tower above us in majestic repose. If the implication that we should bring our Sunday-school practices and our metaphysics of the cosmos into a single view jolts us somewhat, all the

INTRODUCTION

better for both metaphysics and the Sunday school! Better for metaphysics because children and love are prime data therefor; better for the Sunday school because knowing clearly what we want is the surest way to get what we want.

GEORGE A. COE.

New York City,
December 3, 1917.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER I	
OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS	9
CHAPTER II	
THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES	27
CHAPTER III	
A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM	57
CHAPTER IV	
THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION	100

CHAPTER I

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

All things exist in relation to all other things. For the most part these relationships are evident; and where they are not evident we still have the all-inclusive force known as gravitation, through which the least atom and the most massive star are tied together with a bond that never breaks. Even the so-called atoms, which science once postulated as the irreducible units out of which all material things are built, are now regarded rather as complex forms, each a miniature solar system. Inanimate nature is thus a complex society, in which every separate form is related to every other form. Moreover, these inanimate parts seem to show a tendency not merely to associate with each other, but to provide such society where it does not exist. If it be true that "the molecule and the crystal alike tend to increase their kind," we have at least the adumbration of that

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

highest function of society, the perpetuation through future time of one's species.

Between the inanimate world and the animate there appears to be a chasm not to be crossed, yet even this does not limit the law of interdependence. The geographers have said that man has changed the face of the earth more by his enterprise than all the earthquakes and tornadoes have done since the beginning of time. Not only in extent but in kind this change is effected. The rough ore becomes a Corliss engine, the desert sand a lens to bring the heavenly bodies near. Earth and water are changed by man's intervention to flowers and fruit, and these in turn make possible human energy, thought, emotions. The coal hidden in the hills man converts into warmth, or power, or light, or into a current that carries his thought across the lands and under the seas.

If man thus uses and transforms material things, these lay their hands restrainingly on him, and set bounds to his activities. We are at every moment dependent upon the atmosphere, the withdrawal or even a change of which within a small range of density or of temperature would quickly end our lives.

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

Our food, sustaining us moment by moment, comes from an ever widening area of the earth's surface. Gravitation binds us rigidly to the earth, with a force no human power can thwart and only the utmost of human skill can use with any freedom; and that same gravitation holds us in such strong bonds that on the one hand a violation of its laws, and on the other (could we imagine such a thing) its failure to operate, would spell our instant destruction.

Even in our highest activities, those of the intellect and the emotions, we are yet limited by physical boundaries. It is not necessary to suppose that thought is "a mere secretion of the brain cells" in order to hold that "the production of thought depends upon the action of cells or other elements of the cerebrum." Grant whatever independent conscious life the individual may have enjoyed before birth, enjoys now in the body or may enjoy after death, while in the flesh his intellect must use and so be limited by the physical structure. If, as Prof. William James suggests, the light of human intelligence is part of the infinite illumination, it must at least enter through the window of the brain in order to come to human

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

consciousness. Those windows, though for the time necessary to the admission of that light which lights every man that comes into the world, yet limit and color what they admit.

Thus is man one with his physical environment, the human personality and the celestial sphere in which that personality exists parts of one society, each limiting and limited by the other. Nor is the case different when we think of man's relations with his fellow-man. The division of labor, now carried to an extreme, and the growth of luxurious tastes, demanding supplies from every quarter of the globe, have bound mankind into a compact whole and destroyed any independence the individual may ever have enjoyed. Acquired habits and tastes soon become fixed, and luxuries pass over into necessities without warning. The scholar needs the fisherman to feed him, and the fisherman is dependent upon the scholar and his laboratory to propagate his catch. Highest and lowest, most and least favored, we are one in our dependence upon each other. The helpless invalid, who could not lift a brick or drive a nail, depends upon, and helps to support, the laborer who constructed the hospital or the home. Farmers, miners, sailors,

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

manufacturers, tradesmen, teamsters, railroad men, builders, policemen, editors, authors, social workers, teachers, idealists in ethics and in religion, are co-workers, members of one great and inclusive federation of labor. Each depends upon all the rest, and no man liveth or dieth to himself. Even the idle, the selfish and the vicious are included. The honest man must in the end pay not only his own debts but those of his dishonest neighbor. The industrious must support also the idle, and the virtuous must bear the burden of evil for which the bad are responsible.

Not the least among the kinds of our dependence upon each other are those which bind us to persons we have not seen,—through influences that come to us at second hand. Mr. E. R. Sill, in one of his whimsical articles entitled “Left-over Expressions of Countenance,” speaks of the influence upon us of the faces we pass in the street, and reminds us that the expressions upon them are often the remainder of experiences these persons have just been having. The stranger who smiles in your face does not mean that smile for you; it is a left-over expression from the interview he has just had with a friend. So are we constantly

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

carrying with us and scattering abroad, and so are we as constantly receiving from others, impressions from remote experiences, the past and the distant operating now and here.

Thus it is that the human individual, however dominant he may be, and however distinctive, is part and parcel of a greater whole. As Professor Shaler says, "The whole of an organic realm is a part of a celestial sphere, as that sphere is of a solar system, and that, in turn, of greater stellar associations. Such appears to be the order of individualities. They are distinct because they represent localized modes of action; they are absolutely blended with the whole because the whole is a unit; it may be termed 'the supreme individual,' which has all its relations within itself." He is here speaking of physical things but his words apply as well to human relationships. And society, taken in its largest sense, is that "supreme individual," of which every man is a part, without which he cannot be, through which he must attain his goal.

Two steps are thus to be taken. We must have a clear sense of the reality of people and of things, and we must care enough about them to enter into their operations with helpful pur-

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

pose. For the most part we accept what is about us without sensing its reality. Even men we see as trees walking. Could we but know all we would love all, and gladly give ourselves for the common good. And the gate of entrance into that knowledge is precisely that social relationship which binds each individual to the whole. The problem brings as it were its own solution. Man needs to sympathize with that whole of which he is a part; and it is not mere tautology to say that he learns to sympathize through sympathy. For it is an unconscious, perhaps even a cold and morally valueless entrance into the experiences of others that opens the door to the conscious and warm sympathy wherein lies social salvation. Dr. Royce points out that we believe in the reality of natural objects because we first believe in our fellow-men. "The value of the physical phenomena, whatever inner Being may be behind it, is for us," he says, "primarily this common realm of human experience." We know even the hardest and barest physical thing, that is, through sympathy. The process seems to be not that I believe and therefore assume that you must also believe, but, rather, that I perceive that you accept reality in a

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

certain naïve fashion and therefore my unreasoning impression that things are real becomes fixed as a dogma. I treat the external world as a reality, assured by your example that such it truly is.

May we not go a step further and learn by the same process to look upon the world external to ourselves as not only real but sympathetic? In that case the meaning we attach to nature will be greatly enlarged; things will come nearer, will become neighborly; they will talk to us and we to them. Perhaps astrology and crystal-gazing and auguries in general may be a foreshadowing of a larger Real in which the line of demarcation between animate and inanimate, between things and men, will fade somewhat.

In the ruins of ancient Knossus, Dr. Evans has identified, as he believes, the very doorstep of King Midas. As one looks upon the socket in which the door swung, thousands of years ago, and observes also the sweeping lines scratched in the hard stone where the outer edge of the door scraped its way back and forth (King Midas' front door sagged!) one feels almost as though he were visiting the Cretans across the centuries. And it is that

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

flat stone that is master of ceremonies, and introduces us. It speaks to us, seeming to be as eager to tell us what it knows as we are to question it about the olden time.

Emerson, in "Hamatreya," represents the Concord farmer as reflecting that

'Tis good, when you have crossed the sea and back,
To find the sitfast acres where you left them,

and he more than implies that the satisfaction the farmer thus experiences rests less upon any material advantage the sitfast acres bring him than upon a sense of real companionship with them.

I fancy these pure waters and the flags
Know me, as does my dog; we sympathize;
And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil.

With animate creatures below the human level this is apparent enough. We attribute human qualities to even the wild animals, and find genuine companionship in those of the fireside and the barnyard. They fear us, love us, perhaps hate us, and act toward us very much as though they shared the feeling human beings entertain. Thus they enrich our lives by widening the circle of our interests and af-

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

fections. And if we ask why they thus enter into our experiences, we perceive that it is because we observe in them—or at least fancy that we do—the same movements of thought and feeling and will toward us that we send forth to them. We love them because they first love us. And if any creature, however far removed by nature or custom from our normal companionship, shows affection for us, we instinctively respond in like spirit.

There are then, it may be, stages in the progressing sense of unity between the individual human being and his surroundings. Curiosity comes first. The thing yonder is a somewhat to be observed, worthy of notice. Then, because I cannot live alone but am affected well or ill by what is about me, interest enters; fear or hope follows. With the awakening of mind the thing becomes attractive in and for itself,—its structure, habits, purpose. If it be fulfilling its evident purpose it commands admiration. If it has been thwarted, a sense of pity arises. Thus the magnificent tree awakens one set of emotions, while the tree shattered by lightning rouses other feelings. Another long step is taken when we postulate in the thing contemplated a return of our inter-

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

est. If the botanist can feel that the flower he studies speaks to him, as Tennyson longed that his flower in the crannied wall might do, he becomes one with it, and his circle of life-interest is by so much widened. So one not only

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything,

but fear and hate, trust and love, enjoyment of attentions and desire to serve. And in all this process, be it observed, the moving fact is human sympathy, friendliness, desire for union with all that is.

The question yet remains unanswered, How does the mind and heart of man pass over to his fellow-man? How comes it that we can and even wish to rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep? Here the psychologists and the metaphysicians struggle for light among the dark avenues of human experience, or, like travelers across a morass, they test the ground here and there to find a firm foot-hold. And the bold speculation is put forth that we are indeed of one blood,

Tethered by a liquid cord.

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

The "I in them and thou in me" of Jesus may be, it is suggested, a universal formula. Call it a multiple personality that each individual enjoys, or call it a single Person existing in many bodies, or credit the human mind with overlapping edges through which we meet and blend with others, we are, it is guessed, somehow one,—very literally one.

The praise of altruism may then be more than a sublime moral paradox. He that loseth his life shall find it, perhaps in a very literal way. What if I exist in others as well as in myself? Then, in doing for others I am in effect doing for myself. The good I gain is not merely a reflex, nor is it an idealistic good inferred from an assumption that somehow sacrifice is better than self-aggrandizement. May it be that our selves really over-lap, that only a part of myself is here with me, and that I may truly live in others? Professor Shaler's remark that "the higher the individuality the more completely it may include all the lower in itself" may be expanded and may be paraphrased to read, The larger the soul the more completely it may include other souls, both those higher and lower. Indeed, it seems to be only through such outspreadings that we

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

reach the highest personality. Edward Scribner Ames reminds us that "it is fairly well accepted that the individual comes to self-consciousness through interaction with other individuals," which merely applies Dr. Royce's doctrine of knowledge of fact to the social situation. It may be possible to go even further than this and hold, as Professor Boodin holds, that there is a social mind; and that however intense our individuality at the center there is yet "a field of energy with its vague penumbral edges or spreadings," through the operation of which we are assured of "the first-hand and immediate character of social companionship."

Sympathy, then, becomes the keyword to a rightly-ordered life. Not that invertebrate softness which is lacking in clearness of thought, unable to inflict pain however medicinal or to stand firm against persuasion or criticism in however righteous a cause, but a sympathy that begins with perception, grows with understanding and culminates in devotion. It requires two,—one's self and one's fellows. And its fulness and efficiency depend upon the greatness of the soul in which it finds place. Dr. Johnson used to say of fact and opinion that the former is like an ar-

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

row shot from a cross-bow; its force is the same whether fired by a child or a giant. But opinion, he said, is like an arrow shot from a bow; its force depends upon the man who bends the bow. So of sympathy. Its value is measured by the soul that experiences it. Hence that so-called self-sacrifice that leads to feebleness of bodily life and to flabbiness of thought is not to be commended. True sympathy is not the wasting of self; it is the struggle of the individual to supplement his fragmentary being by the experience of others. Capable of more than his limited needs can utilize, he goes forth sowing and seeking, giving and getting, forgetting himself, yet by that course first truly finding himself.

For it is in others we do truly find our larger selves. Because they live we live also. In them we see our faults which we thereupon learn to correct, and virtues that are incipient in ourselves which we may then cultivate. It is said that he who knows only one language knows none. At least equally is it true that he who knows and cares for but one person—himself—knows not even himself. So does society react upon the individual. We grow rich on what we bestow, not on what we hoard;

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

we become strong by giving our strength into the common stock. Professor Palmer is right when he says: "All the moral aims of life may be summed up in the single word 'self-realization.' Could I fully realize myself, I should have fulfilled all righteousness." But to fulfill one's self is to fill one's sphere, to live not only in his own separate person but in others. I must indeed realize myself. But I can do that only by living in and through my fellows.

The province of religion seems to be to emphasize these social relations. If one could imagine religion to have been imposed upon man from without, then whatever Being instituted it would have done so for the purpose of saving society, saving, that is, our larger selves, even, if necessary, at the expense of our lesser, localized selves. In the mind of the Being who fastened religion upon us there would have been, that is, a fear that the instincts of self-preservation because of their immediacy would overmaster those that lead to care for others. Religion was thus thrown in to weight the scales on the right side and so save man from his own undoing through short-sighted expediency. Not postulating such an origin, and supposing religion to have grown out of the heart of man,

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

we seem driven to the conviction that the social or altruistic instincts are after all stronger than those that are self-regarding. In either case religion and social impulses are bound together by ties not to be broken, and these impulses are precisely the strongest we have.

Religion, then, becomes the saving power in the world. Reinforced by religion, man's other-regarding instincts may oppose his self-regarding instincts with some hope of success. But if religion is to do this high service, it must give forth no uncertain sound. All self-aggrandizement, save with the purpose of having more that more may be given, is foreign to it and weakens its power to help. The religionist who urges men to seek personal salvation in an escape from the penalties of their own wrong-doing strikes at the very life of the race. Such exhortation—we will not dignify it by calling it teaching—is essentially unsocial. It intensifies the self-regarding instincts, and separates a man from his fellows. This is not salvation. It is in a real sense damnation.

Not just religion, then, but true religion,—religion, that is, that is true to the purpose for which we are here, is what the world needs: a

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

religion that makes men love men, and long to serve them. Love is the fulfilling of the law. And whatever awakens love, and makes men aware of their fellows and to desire above all things to help them to realize their best selves, is in the line of the purpose observable in society. It is just here that the thought of God enters most effectively, especially the thought of God's parental relation to us, as set forth in the teaching of Jesus. For, however interesting it is to seek and find a satisfactory theory of the Divine Existence, and however helpful it is to recognize and adore the Divine Presence, it remains true that our greatest need of God is that through Him we may enter into a common sonship. Through that thought as through an open door I may enter into your life and you into mine with helpful influence. He who is utterly remote from me, who by any avenue on the level of human interest is inaccessible to me, becomes all at once my brother in a very sacred family relationship. And, by the same avenue, I approach the humble beast and the unknowing powers of nature. St. Francis, his heart filled with the love of God the universal Father, is led to preach to his

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS

little sisters the birds, and to sing his canticle to his brothers and sisters the sun, the winds and the rain.

The essentially social nature of the universe of which we are part, everywhere operative but only in man recognized and felt, fixes the nature and the boundaries of our task. We are not to make men members of this universal society—they are already that—we are to socialize them, to develop in them latent capacities to live the larger life. In doing this, religion is, as we have seen, our main dependence. But if religion is to be fully operative and in the highest sense efficient, it must so saturate men that right attitudes become habitual and right acts automatic. And this is to be accomplished only by the method of religious education, that is, by meeting the growing character at each stage of its development with such instruction and influence as it needs and can use. It is to a study of the underlying principles of a right religious education that we are now to turn.

CHAPTER II

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Religion and education are the two greatest agencies making for the development of man. These two agencies meet in religious education, the one providing impulse and material, the other, method. Religion alone may furnish no more than an emotion, which, however fine, may last but for the moment, leaving behind neither a deposit of character nor a tale of good deeds done. Education alone may sharpen wits and equip for efficiency without insuring the use of developed powers for any good end. Not until impulse solidifies into character and the right attitude becomes a fixed habit can the work of salvation be regarded as complete. And this means no less than the saturation of the whole being with religious purposes, until the thinking of right thoughts and the doing of right acts become practically automatic.

To accomplish this end is the purpose of religious education. But can we really educate?

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

There are those who say we cannot; that nature has her own way of perfecting her own work, so that any attempt on our part is foredoomed to failure. One of the most stimulating hypotheses of modern times has been that there is a parallel between racial and individual development. The so-called doctrine of recapitulation teaches that every person repeats in his own history the history of the development of animal and human life on the planet. All pre-human evolution, according to this doctrine, is repeated, step by step, in the child's pre-natal experience, while the history of the race is repeated in his subsequent development. Advocates of this theory have even gone so far as to declare that only by such repetition can normal human development be reached. Let the child, they say, be, at the appropriate time, a cave-man, a tree-dweller, a fighting savage; so only can he get these inherited instincts out of his system; they are the stepping-stones to his higher self. To deny full expression of these instincts is but to bottle them up to issue later, not, now, in harmless boisterousness, but as crimes against persons and property.

With this recapitulation theory we have here no concern, save to remark in passing that

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

while some of the parallelisms pointed out seem to be based on ascertained facts, its detailed applications, especially those leading to educational theory, are so ill-founded and fantastic that among biologists its vogue has largely passed away. Certainly as religious teachers we cannot accept its extreme claims. Shall we, indeed, abandon all our dreams of helping our young people to become God-fearing men and women, and let them dig and climb and quarrel and swagger and fight, confident that nature is thus perfecting her work, and that in the end they will be found to have achieved, by these steps, a refined and Christian character? This seems not to be a well founded expectation.

Moreover, such a contention overlooks the very meaning of evolution. For animal development and human progress have had at each stage for seal and crown a fresh power with which to cope with nature in a new way, to break away from inheritances, and to rule life no longer from the limited past but from the enlarged present. And human life has even gone beyond this, so that the man may free himself not only from his past but from his present; may, that is, project himself into an

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

unattained future, see himself in a situation not yet reached, and make this idealized picture of himself the ruling power in his life.

Man may be governed by ideals. In his best estate he is so governed. To go back, therefore, to prehistoric times and conditions to find the governing power in human action seems to be an abdication of the very privilege to gain which the race has striven and suffered through uncounted centuries. It is not inherently unreasonable to expect the past to have its way with us within certain limits. We cannot escape from our ancestors. But among our inheritances is one supreme legacy,—a gift of God or a slowly acquired power as you will. It is an ability, a propensity, to break away from environment and to shake off inheritances, a tendency to live for—and in a very real sense in—the future. You cannot describe a man by recounting his past, you do not even sum him up by adding to this what he now is. A very real element in his personality is what he only partly is but means wholly to be. This, his ideal self, is a genuine part of him.

It is just here that the religious teacher has his opportunity. It is his to see his pupils not

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

in the light of their racial history, nor wholly in that of their actual and perhaps sordid present, but in the light of what they may become. And just because they have not seen the pattern in the mount, it is for him to see it for them and to help them to form their lives in accordance with it. Instead of rehearsing them in ancestral traditions, it is his to help them to pull away from those traditions, and to rehearse them in that better life for which they are also fitted. He must indeed watch for the outcroppings of racial tendencies,—traits once, it may be, useful, but now out of place and debasing. But instead of encouraging their indulgence he must offer the higher and forward looking interest. “Instincts do not wear out by use, they wear in.” Let the goal, then, be set before the child, not behind him. The past will take care of itself; it is the future that should engage our attention. The animal in every human being will speak quite loud enough; our business is to make the spirit vocal.

Various methods of bringing the character up to its highest possible development have been advocated. There is the method of “breaking the will,” of beating the evil out of

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

the child and so making him absolutely submissive, and there is the opposite method of letting nature have her way, assuming that her way is right and tends of itself toward perfection. Instead of either of these, the method here advocated is the way of guidance. Use coercion, indeed, but let it be the compelling power of high ideals embodied in lives and systematically brought to bear on developing characters. It is the business of the adult to guide the child. It should be done in love, but it must be done with decision. Why else have we grown to manhood and womanhood and gone through with all the developing experiences of life, if we are not to utilize these dearly-bought gains in helping children to avoid our mistakes and to profit by what we have learned? Nobler service than that of leading young lives into the way of righteousness and usefulness was never vouchsafed to man. It is our supreme privilege, and it is our most solemn duty.

What, then, are the fundamental principles of a right religious education? To answer this question it will be necessary to consider, first, the materials that should be used in teaching; second, the methods to be followed; and third,

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

the atmosphere or surrounding conditions which will serve to transform the instruction given into motive power making for the good life.

1. *The Material.*

Two essential facts to be remembered in choosing material to be used in religious education are, first, that the purpose of all such effort is to equip those taught for the highest social usefulness, and, second, that the society in which such usefulness is to be exercised includes not only all human beings who live or have lived or are yet to live, but all living forms and all inanimate things,—in a word, that total environment into which the individual has come and with which, perforce, he must sustain some kind of relations; and by the same token it must include the Author of all, expressions of whose power and purpose all things are.

Man, depending upon atom and star, plant and animal, human beings of all ages and races, and God, of whom are all things, must act toward all socially, performing his part in the economy of the universe. To do this he must know and he must love, the ideal goal being the acquisition of all knowledge and of a per-

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

fect good-will. Only Deity can be thought of as attaining this goal, but toward it our efforts must tend. The material of religious education, then, is as comprehensive as is reality itself. Whatsoever is known in any realm of knowledge may be used: all science, all history, all literature, all art. Given the perfect teacher, the eager disciple and unlimited time, there would be nothing in the whole realm of fact and experience and thought and aspiration but would be suitable material to use in religious education.

There are, however, limitations to this ambitious scheme. These limitations are so obvious that the only reason for presenting the impossible ideal is that there is urgent need that religious educators break away from conventional usages and recast their curricula along broader lines. What may be taught? *Everything* that is true either as fact or as illumination. What *should* be taught? That must depend upon the end we seek, and upon the capacity of teachers to teach and of pupils to learn. The greater souled the teacher the more widely does he discern the divineness in things, and the wider his range of subjects. Jesus found saving goodness in the despised

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

men and women of his time, and drew spiritual lessons from the commonest objects.

In selecting suitable material, then, from out that exhaustless storehouse, our first limiting consideration must be that we shall choose what will further social ends. Ulfilas, apostle to the Germanic peoples, left out of his translation of the Bible which he carried to them the history of the wars of Israel. Those barbarians, he said, knew enough already about fighting; what they needed, he saw, was to learn to live together in peace,—to be socialized. So he adapted his material to the needs of his hearers. Would that all teachers of religion had been in the past, or were today, as wise as he!

We must not, however, apply this test too narrowly. Man's social contacts are many, and his preparation to meet social needs has many aspects. He must know and entertain good-will toward all that is, and to make his good-will effective he must seek enlargement. On the one hand, then, he will study to know the world he lives in and is to serve. To gain knowledge is to make one's self more efficient, and, as he comes to know the wonders of nature and life, to become more humble and reverent.

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

On the other hand, he will not neglect to develop his bodily vitality, so that his good intentions may be the better carried out. With this understanding we may reaffirm the dictum that any scheme of education that does not have for its goal the socializing of the individual, that promotes pride of learning, or separates the scholar from the unlearned has missed its aim and has harmed rather than helped him who has gained it. Whatever culture really enlarges the sympathies and multiplies contacts and stimulates to service is to be classed as religious education. The wise teacher will select whatever leads to right feeling, right thinking and right living, rejecting whatever does not so affect his pupils, quite regardless of its source.

Secular and sacred thus take on new meanings; that is secular which merely entertains or informs, that is sacred which makes men brothers in the family of God. And if it be objected that by this rule we might be led to teach what is better taught in secular schools, we may remind the objector and perhaps ourselves that our supreme purpose is not to inform the mind but to quicken the affections and to awaken good-will. It is the sermons

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

that are in the stones and not the stones themselves that we present.

If our first limitation is the finding of what will socialize our pupils and make them better members of society, a second limitation lies in their changing capacity and needs, especially in those early years during which they are most ready to grasp and profit by our instruction. The differences that are discovered in young people as they pass through succeeding years are due partly to a growing mental capacity and partly to certain moral and spiritual crises through which they pass. In choosing our material, then, we must ask what, at any given stage, the learners are capable of grasping and what, in their then moral or spiritual situation, they need to lead them to the next stage in healthful fashion.

It is interesting to note the changes that have occurred in the last half century in teaching even the simplest branches, as, for example, reading. Our fathers naïvely assumed that a short word was easier for children to read than a long one, overlooking the fact that they were using long words as freely as short ones, and that a longer word might offer more points of interest than a short one. This method was

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

carried into all teaching, the most abstruse ideas and subjects remotely related to the child's field of interest being presented to quite young children,—but always in short words! The main difficulty with this method lies not in the length of words chosen or rejected but in the failure to connect the new idea to be imparted with any experience or interest already in the mind.

One need not be extreme in his insistence on interests—at least interests already acquired—as setting absolute bounds to instruction. It is not wholly what the child now cares for but what he might and should be made to care for that should be considered. But in any case we must meet the child where he is, not only in the vocabulary used but in the ideas to be conveyed. The law of growth applies to the mind as well as to the body. Procrustes, in his attempt to make persons of various height fit his bed, probably succeeded with those too long better than with those too short. The former he could cut off with results at once immediate and decisive. The short ones, however, might not survive the effort to lengthen them; or, if they were so unhappy as to survive, they might find their new length of little use to them. So

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

with children. They are not men and women. They are not even little men and little women. They are children; they live now, in their own world, a very real, a very significant life; and if we are to help them as they pass through the stages of their growth, we must do so by meeting them where they are, adapting our efforts to their present needs and capacities. Meat for men and milk for babes; and you cannot make meat suitable for babes by chopping it fine, nor milk a sustaining diet for men by boiling it down.

Jesus placed a little child in the midst. Froebel said, "Let us live with our children." The most gifted teachers have ever been those most gifted with sympathy. An understanding heart is of equal value with an enlightened head; for unless we connect with the children's interests and capacities, our wisest lore is lost upon them. What, then, shall we teach the children? What they need and can assimilate. That is the first essential. We may find it in the Bible or in the world myths, or in the realm of fairy story, or among the wonders of nature. Its source is a matter of indifference. The one thing that matters is whether or not it fits their needs.

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

To this law, revolutionary in its character, there is what appears to be but is not an exception. Children's memories outrun their understanding, so that they may commit to memory what they cannot comprehend and what does not seem to fit their momentary needs. What child can know the full meaning of Tennyson's "Flower in the Crannied Wall," or Wordsworth's "Daffodils," or Browning's "Pippa Passes," or Paul's great chapter, or Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? Yet these may and should be committed to memory at an early age. While not within the child's rational capacity, they at least fit in with his ability in verbal memory, and while holding treasures of spiritual help that only time and experience and hunger of heart can reveal, tend even in early life to quicken the roots of those spiritual qualities that will blossom and bear fruit all the more abundantly because of these fertilizing thoughts.

Again, in choosing teaching material traditional sources may be given a certain preference, since they represent and embody human experience. All nations use preferably those literatures regarded as sacred, the bibles of the world furnishing for the most part the

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

text for religious instruction. In general, and roughly considered, this is right. Among ourselves, for example, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are drawn upon far in excess of other sources. It so happens that the books of our Bible are rich in teaching material. If courses of religious instruction must be planned, as is often the case, by those unskilled in pedagogy, the Bible is the safest treasury from which to draw. But the intelligent builder of a curriculum will consider first and with most concern what his pupils need; and while, it may be, predisposed toward the Bible, will unhesitatingly select what he believes to be best for those whom he would teach, whencesoever it comes.

A second and equally important matter is the child's moral needs. For children do have moral needs, and these change from year to year. The theory—or it may be only a vague impression—that the child is a non-moral being, his naughty ways mere peccadilloes and his right acts merely graces, both temporal and negligible, has had much to do with our unwise teaching and governing of the young. It may well be that we should not judge their acts by the same standards we use in judging adults.

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

It is not, however, moral judgments but moral training that we are considering. Let the little ones' doings pass without moral evaluation; but let us not forget that they are solidifying character, their passing acts and moods finding their way into their souls, slowly fixing their destinies. The mood and the moment pass; the deposit of good or bad remains.

In addition, then, to meeting the child's interests and mental capacities, we must consider the needs of his moral nature, providing such restraints, reassurances and incitements as he needs from time to time, that as he grows in stature he may also grow in favor with God and man.

2. *The Method.*

Religious education is to be promoted largely by the same methods as have been found successful in secular teaching. There is the teacher who knows and the pupil with a mind to learn. There is also suggested certain apparatus,—text-books, maps, black-boards, chairs of different heights, tables. There should be enough apparatus to facilitate teaching and not enough to distract attention from the real purpose of the effort being put

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

forth. All this is matter of common knowledge, but one sometimes finds startling reminders that such knowledge, while common, is far from universal.

The need of adequate appliances, felt in all teaching, is especially acute in the teaching of religion. Such teaching must often be done by persons whose good intentions outrun their equipment, at irregular and widely separated periods. Moreover, while the material taught has the most direct relation to the learners' happiness and welfare, that connection is not so obvious as it is with that which they get in secular schools. All the more is it incumbent upon those responsible for the organization and equipment of schools of religion to see to it that up to the limit of possibility there be provided whatever apparatus will make the efforts put forth effective in accomplishing the ends for which the teaching is done.

Especially are these considerations of weight when we remember that our aim is not merely to instruct but to socialize our pupils. To bring these young people into vital, appreciative and responsive relations with that social whole in which they are already caught up and in which for good or ill they must live and act,

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

is the most tremendous task ever undertaken; a task as delicate as it is vast, and to be approached spiritually as well as technically. Through every sense, by countless appeals, they are to be sensitized as well as instructed. To accomplish this end every possible agency should be provided, and each in its best form.

One essential condition for carrying out such an education is that its method must be social. The stimulus arising from individual or class rivalries, regarded by many educators as of much value, may well either be relinquished or found in some other way. To offer prizes to those who surpass their classmates, to promote some and hold back others on the results of competitive tests, may bring estrangements among those we are trying to unite, and promote egotistic aloofness and self-repressing shame among those whose spiritual unity is the final test of our success. In religious schools more emphasis should be placed upon coöperation than upon rivalry. The boy or girl who, instead of getting his lesson, has used the time needed for that purpose in helping some less forward pupil to do his task, may indeed fail in recitation; but he has shown a mastery of the end sought, and deserves not

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

criticism or reproof but the highest praise.

If we may not have rivalry, we need not therefore lose entirely the stimulus rivalry offers. Emulation remains. The race may be not to surpass another but one's self. Just as the growing child delights to measure himself against the wall, to see if his present height is not a little greater than it was the last time he tried it, so he may be led to take pleasure in developing powers, and in observing a growing ease in doing difficult tasks. Then, there is a subtle joy, felt by even the young, in finding one's self able to help another. We may discover in that pleasure the love of mastery, of leadership; but it is well thus early to lay hold on this fine but dangerous propensity and direct it into right channels. For the joy of successful rivalry, we must substitute the nobler joy of helpful service.

Nor is the opportunity for such service far to seek. The school of religion need not go abroad for its task and its opportunity, it finds these at home. The individual child is part of a larger whole, his class; the class is a component part of the school; the school is a vital activity of the church, and the church is in and of the community. Here is society, ready at

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

hand to serve and be served, and thus is provided an agency unsurpassed for stimulating interest and promoting that social consciousness and activity which we seek. Every pupil in such a school may be given some definite share in promoting the welfare of the world in which he lives. Every class may well adopt some philanthropy for its own. Every school of religion should feel its organic power and use that power to make the community in which it lives more happy and wholesome. And many a teacher, discouraged by vain efforts to interest his pupils in studying about religion, has seen his class vitalized by enlisting them in the practice of religion.

A question which arises here is whether or not it is well, in this coöperative study and work, to bring the sexes together in the smaller groups, or classes. On the one hand it is argued that at about the age of nine there arises the first consciousness of that radical demarcation which separates the human family into two nearly equal halves, and that this new sense of difference acts, in the beginning, to promote a certain sex-antagonism and, later, to stimulate such intense sex-attraction as to interfere, in both cases, with good teaching. On the

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

other hand it is urged that the sexes must live together, and in fact do so live in the home, the public schools, in many colleges, and in the normal relations of business and recreation. Why make the exception to this rule in the school of religion, especially in view of the fact that in such a school the teaching, the religious services and the whole attitude of mind and heart are such as should make such association normal? Granting the difficulty of teaching boys and girls together, why is not our school precisely the place to overcome it, to bring all together on a plane above ignoble associations, and so help to solve that age-long problem of social morality?

The balance of the argument seems clearly to favor mixed classes. There are, however, certain practical considerations which may make it seem, in at least some cases, wiser to follow the line of least resistance and teach the boys and girls separately. One such consideration is that as matters now stand in church schools, with untrained teachers and the absence of class rooms and apparatus, it is difficult to get any teaching whatever really done. Why, then, add an unnecessary difficulty? Another consideration is that such coöperative

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

efforts as are represented in the Boy Scouts, the Campfire Girls, Knights of King Arthur, Junior Alliances and the like, are more easily formed and maintained with segregated classes. Not only are these organizations regarded as worth while in themselves, they often serve to provide just that class spirit which is so helpful in the teaching of religion. There seems, then, no hard-and-fast solution to this problem. It is well to recognize the ideal, and it is also well to recognize the actual situation. In the end it may seem best to leave the question undecided, doing in each case the best that can be done, leaning always in the direction of that complete socialization in religious study and work wherein is "neither male nor female," but "one body in Christ."

The method of teaching religion in such a way as to promote social efficiency and the brotherly spirit is, then, the method of coöperation. In a given group, such as a church, let the pupils see all—minister, church, committee, congregation, officers and teachers—working together harmoniously, energetically, effectively; let them be impressed by every lesson taught, by every activity of the school, by the declared purpose and by the methods used,

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

that the end of all is brotherliness, warm and effectual, and the total impression upon the pupils will be the feeling that working together is the normal way of living. So will method join with material to promote the end we seek, the ability and the desire to help bring in the kingdom of God.

3. *The Atmosphere.*

What we learn is of less importance than how we learn, and what we do is of less importance than how we do it. Purpose is not all, but it is nine-tenths. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh and conduct proceeds. To give the right point of view, to quicken the right spirit, to set learners upon the right road, is to accomplish our task. It is necessary, therefore, to have in the school the right atmosphere. Impressions must be striven for as diligently as instruction. And since the religious attitude is the thing for which above all else we are striving, it follows that our school must be in all its parts and activities a religious school.

In most schools of religion there are two periods, one for study and one for worship. The period devoted to study should in the main

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

be conducted as one would conduct a school of any other kind. The teachers are there to teach and the pupils have come to learn. There should, therefore, be genuinely hard work done, with the impartation of knowledge, memory drill, questionings that test acquisition and awaken thought. And there should be also that which comes as a matter of course in secular teaching, but seems necessary to strive for in the teaching of religion, namely, the open mind, the frank search for truth.

They do childhood and youth great harm who attempt to shield sacred things from scrutiny. Better even youthful crudity and hasty doubt than the suspicion, left latent in the young learner's mind so often by well-meaning defenders of the faith, that religion cannot stand on its own feet and will not bear investigation. Children taught in this guarded way may indeed accept for a time the traditional teaching, but if with that teaching there is implanted the idea that religious truth rests upon a basis less secure than other truth, doubt is mixed with faith in dangerous proportion. For reason will not be forever docile; questions will arise and demand an answer; and the suspicion that no satisfactory answer is to be ex-

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

pected settles the matter in the inquiring mind, and settles it the wrong way.

Nothing that keeps thought out is safe from thought,
And truth defensive hath lost hold on God.

Absolute frankness in religious teaching, such frankness as is possible only to those whose trust in the eternal verities is so sure that they are devoid of fear, is essential. This is the first condition of adequate teaching of religion, and the second is that whatever truth is taught should be presented as God's truth. Once catch the idea that things are as they are, that the way they are is the way God made them, so that to know them as they are is to know God, and the inquiring mind is seen to be no enemy to faith but its staunchest friend. No flippancy! No, but that is an equally necessary condition in any study. Truth is a serious matter. If our contention is right, it is a sacred matter. Then let religious teaching treat it seriously and not dodge issues or juggle meanings. No flippancy! And equally no dogmatism! The scoffer and the bigot are alike shut out from the holy of holies. In the eager desire for truth, in the diligent search for what, when found, will be recognized as sacred,

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

we discover one of the highest manifestations of faith. While teaching facts we may be imparting religion. If the teacher has come to feel the sacredness of God's creation from atom to man, so that all truth and all beauty and all right purpose are gifts of God and indications of His presence, there will be no necessity of bringing in a religious atmosphere, it is there already. The thing studied, be it oak leaf, or beetles, or Egyptian tombs, or Hebrew literature, or Gospel story, will by its reverent handling carry religion over from the teacher to the pupil. "When the gods would ride, any chip will do for a chariot." By the contagion of spirit from devout teacher to impressible youth reverence is promoted, and the teaching of truth becomes an act of worship.

In the period devoted to praise and prayer there is the same need of sincerity and of painstaking effort. It is no easy task to gather up a group composed of people of the most widely contrasting ages and experience, and weld them into a worshipping congregation. They come together only at widely separated intervals, and rarely if ever in identical groups. And yet without waste of precious time these many individuals must be made one worship-

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

ping body, the bright and the dull, the happy and the depressed, the care-free and the anxious, the mischievous and the docile, the oldest and the youngest must be unified; and this unity must be sought not in the lower and easily awakened interests of life, but in the realm of the spirit.

Of all agencies that may be employed in this high service, music has perhaps the first place. Instrumental music may well open such a service, especially if, beginning however brightly, it culminates in some high and pure harmony. Better no music at all than that which is merely noisy, or suggests romping rather than meditation. And the same is true of that which should follow, the service of song. It is to be lamented that so many of the songs provided for schools of religion are not only trivial, perhaps even vicious, in their thought, but cheap and poor in their melody and harmony. So great is the power of music and so varied its appeal that almost any mood may be induced by it. In selecting songs for use in a religious assemblage we should carefully choose those which will produce the mood desired, the mood of friendliness and reverence. Better the great hymns of the church which even young

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

children sing with the spirit if not always with the understanding, than the shallow, cheaply emotional jingles too often provided.

If the end we seek is the promotion of the social spirit, we will sing about it and we will pray about it. And since that social spirit is made up of reverence and friendliness, it is these sentiments for which we will seek throughout, in scripture and prayer as well as in song: reverence for all, from Deity to atom, friendliness for all, from atom to God. And if we can unite the least with the greatest in one act of loving wonder and awe, we have at a stroke truly socialized our group. Sing, then, the praise of God, especially if His glory can be discovered in the near and the familiar. Sing, too, the love of man, especially if that love springs out of our perception of the divineness of the human soul. Sing and read and pray about the summer sun and the winter snows, about bird and beast and flower and tree, about clouds and storms, about seasons and stars, provided always these are presented as members with us, with even the least of us, of a Social Whole whose law is brotherhood and whose uniting principle is God.

For it is here in the service of praise and

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

prayer that the child as well as the adult may be lifted out of self-seeking and egotism, out of petty striving for low ends, not to lose himself but truly to find himself—his larger self—in that Social Whole of which he is part. The test of successful worship is not found in the fact that hymn and scripture and prayer have been used, and in a given order. Has the mind been directed toward some manifestation of the indwelling God? Have the currents of the soul been set in right channels? Has the heart been quickened to a comprehensive friendliness and the will awakened to strive for noble deed? Do we begin to see our own bodies as agents of the spirit, holy because commissioned to holy tasks? Has there been at least one moment of that “inward collectedness” which unites the otherwise isolated life with the life universal? This is the test.

Such an experience of real worship, in which every soul is lifted as by a common impulse into the very presence of God, may be, perhaps must of necessity be, for a moment only. No such exalted attitude can be long maintained, especially by children. Nor is it necessary that it be prolonged. One glimpse of the Eternal, one timeless experience of the Divine Presence,

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

and the whole outlook upon life is changed.

Worship is thus the supreme act of the educational process. We know nothing thoroughly until we know it as part of a divine order. It is not enough that it be intellectually perceived as such; it must be emotionally apprehended and volitionally accepted as such. Worship thus unites us with that Social Whole with which we are destined to be members. We become one through worship, because we are truly one only in God.

CHAPTER III

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

In outlining a proposed curriculum in religious education three things are essential: a clear perception of the nature of that society into which the children for whom we plan are to be inducted, a comprehensive survey of the material from which we are to draw, and a map of life, indicating with what clearness and precision is possible just what are the mental and moral capacities and needs of each age through which our pupils pass. That society includes, as we have seen, not only all of humanity, but all things and all beings. The materials from which we are to draw comprehend the total range of interest,—nature, history, literature, philosophy, philanthropy. And the map of life, which we are next to outline, must include at least the period of human development, from birth to early maturity. Even these limits are set through practical necessity, since a right religious education must go back of

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

birth and concern itself with heredity, and forward beyond early maturity, making religious progress coterminous with life.

It is only during the last few years that a map or chart of developing life could be made, for it is within the recollection of those yet living that genetic psychology has come into being, the extent and thoroughness of study in this field constituting a striking chapter in the history of scientific advance. It is not meant by this that all religious teaching has hitherto been wrong. Far from that. But, with the fullest appreciation of the excellent work our fathers did, it is our privilege to proceed along lines laid down by nature herself, profiting by facts of which our fathers were unaware. A curious illustration of this is seen in a course of graded study in religion that was issued by the Unitarian Sunday School Society in 1852, apparently the earliest graded course in religious education ever published. In this series, separate books are provided for each year, beginning with the age of eleven. All below that age were to be taught from a single book. From the contents of this book, and from the directions given to teachers for its use, it is evident that the authors of the course had little or

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

no appreciation of differences among the younger children. There was one thing they could do, they could commit passages to memory. Suitable material was provided, and teachers were urged to exercise diligence in getting the great passages from scripture and poetry fastened securely in the children's minds, against that time, to come later on, when such treasures of thought would be of use.

This naïve view of childhood contrasts sharply with that which now is accepted by all students of psychology and used by educators who are abreast of present-day knowledge. During the years of life in which those pioneers found children all of one sort, having but one outstanding faculty, that of memory, we now find the widest and most significant differences. As a foremost educator has said, "Children are alike, as birds and bushes are alike, only when we do not know them."

In making such a map of life as shall be serviceable we are met by serious difficulties. Such a chart is at best mechanical, and children are not machines. It must proceed by years, and nature has little respect for birthdays. And it must be made for "the average child,"

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

a creature that never was on land or sea. The ideally graded curriculum would follow one child—one only—as its mind and character developed, and would be changed instantly to meet any new situation that arose. All this is, of course, impracticable. We must sacrifice somewhat of the ideal, and prepare our curriculum, if only to serve as a rigid trellis on which to support our living efforts. By years, then, and making as near approach as may be to the needs of actual children as we find them, our life plan must be drawn.

Even as we do this we observe a further peculiarity in our scheme, that, not content with arranging itself by years, it still further groups itself into longer epochs. Yet even this is in keeping with the observed facts of life, since, despite rapid changes from year to year and even from month to month, children retain certain characteristics for comparatively long periods, so that they can be dealt with profitably in larger groups. And moreover, since that very awakening and development of the social spirit which we seek throughout is helped by, is, indeed, really dependent upon, the experience of social living, we must educate in groups. These larger groups can rarely be formed with

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

children of precisely the same age. Even if this were possible, it is to be questioned whether it would be wise to do so, since the very effort it costs the younger ones to keep pace with the older, and the older ones to accommodate their greater physical and mental attainments to the capacities of the younger, provides a socializing agency of the highest value.

A right religious education seems to demand a certain amount of group teaching. It is well that this, at times, should include people of all ages, as, for example, in the opening and closing exercises of a school of religion. Common worship means doing things together; it is the highest form of social activity. There is one thing to be said for even the now discredited one-topic lesson plan, that it does promote unity of feeling. But since all good pedagogy forbids the use of this device, we may accomplish all that it offers and escape its evils by the plan now followed in many of the best schools. According to this plan, people of all ages meet for a period of common worship. Following this, groups, more or fewer according to the size of the school and including persons of somewhat similar ages, gather for a further brief service of worship in which the

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

forms and ideas are graduated to the understanding and needs of those present. Finally, they separate for purposes of instruction into still smaller classes, in which membership should be limited as strictly as possible to pupils of equal age.

With these considerations and limitations in mind, the following schedule of years, from birth to the age of twenty, is now offered: ¹

<i>Years</i>	<i>Names of Groups</i>
1, 2, 3	Cradle Roll
4, 5	Beginners
6, 7, 8	Primary
9, 10, 11	Junior
12, 13, 14	Intermediate
15, 16, 17	Senior
18, 19, 20	Advanced

Such a schedule offers certain advantages. It is easily remembered, as each group, with the exception of the second, includes three

¹ The outline here given was adopted by a Committee on Nomenclature, of which the author was chairman, after consultation with many leading educators, and was presented as its report at the Annual Meeting of the Religious Education Association held at Buffalo in 1915. That report is given in full in the magazine *Religious Education* for April of that year. The grading scheme thus recommended had been adopted previously by the Editorial Board of the Beacon Course in Religious Education, of which Course the author of this treatise is an editor. It is now being widely accepted.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

years, and experience shows that the usefulness of any plan depends in large measure upon the ease with which it is kept in mind. Far more important is the fact that such groups do, on the whole, bring together those most congenial to each other and most similar in mental and moral development. It is not offered, be it noted, as a complete or even wholly satisfactory psychological formula, but as a pedagogical device having more to commend it than any other so far offered. Our next task will be to consider these ages and groups, attempting to suggest a course of religious guidance that will help growing characters through their successive stages of mental and moral development into a fully socialized, that is, into a truly Christian, manhood and womanhood.

1. *The Cradle Roll.* Ages 1, 2, 3.

This title is chosen because it is already in general use. It is the happy custom of churches to enrol newly-born children in the Cradle-roll Department of the Church School, issuing to them certificates of membership and sending them messages of reassuring love at stated times, such as on birthdays and at the time of the Easter and Christmas celebrations.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

By this act of enrolment the little ones are first recognized by and formally admitted to the larger human society into which they were born. And what entrance into the privileges and responsibilities of such a social whole could be more fitting? The church, whatever its defects, yet stands for the highest life-ideals, and is composed of those who confess that they seek a heavenly kingdom. The home is thus linked up with the church, both in effect confessing to their separate inadequacy to the task of bringing up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and covenanting together to exercise watch-care over the growing life. The church recognizes its supreme responsibility, the parents are quickened to an appreciation of the place of religion in the guidance of life, and the child unfolds within rather than outside of organized and coöperative religion.

If the church thus enters the home at the sacred moment of the coming of a new life, it should offer to the parents some definite religious guidance. And what assistance can it bring? Not its theology, surely, nor its obligations. Even its forms and ceremonies are out of place, save that symbolic act of baptism, by which the church assumes more responsi-

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

bilities than does the child on whose unconscious head the water falls. But one thing the church can do, one gift, its very best treasure, it can bestow. It can bring religion into the home, and into the very life of the infant of days. For what is religion but life idealized and transfigured? And what is life but the interplay of those two great factors, freedom and restraint? Man is essentially a dynamic creature. His reason-for-being is that something needs to be done and he can do it. Why else is he here? To do this task he is made free. But experience soon shows that to this freedom there are rigid bounds, some physical, some social. And the saving wisdom of life, that wisdom which at its highest is one with religion, is to exercise the whole of freedom within the encircling restraints.

Little the child knows of these abstractions, but from his first breath he is in immediate touch with them. To him, the parents represent human society, fate, Deity. That is their supreme business, to interpret these eternal realities in terms that can be felt if not understood by the new-born child. Thus far and no farther! True, parents, by a fine instinct, misinterpret reality and overload the balance on

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

the side of freedom, taking upon themselves the penalties that follow the little ones' too great exercise of liberty. But while this is the glory of parenthood, thus like Winkelried to gather into themselves the spears of violated laws that their children may go scot-free, it is a dangerous privilege. The "spoiled child" who is so great a nuisance to others is himself the worst sufferer from the over-indulgence of his parents. He has a wrong start in life, and the world will make it a point to teach him his error later on. Even so he may not learn but go on to the end a misfit in society.

Much can be taught in those first three years. No need of book or stated course. No call here for instructors other than father and mother,—the latter chiefly. To greet the newborn child with love; to protect from too great heat or cold or brightness of lamp or sun; to make all seasons one, turn night to day and day to night, to be creators of a new world that never was before nor will be again, but is made expressly for this helpless child! But, equally, to represent the sterner aspects of life, its discipline, this is the parents' duty. Failing in this their very love is as poison in the child's veins; he is miserable himself and makes others

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

miserable about him. But love with law, or, better, love in law, love that expresses itself as fully in restraints as in indulgences, this is the curriculum of infancy.

In carrying out this curriculum the church has a definite work to do. Its first task is to Christianize the parents and introduce into the home the atmosphere of sincere piety. Happy the child that grows up in a home where prayer and thanksgiving are spontaneous and normal, the expression of a sense of being caught up in the moral order. It is not the desire for this expression of religious feeling that is lacking in most homes, but knowledge how it may be brought about. Here is the church's opportunity. Through parents' classes, by providing books that help parents to understand and wisely rear their little ones, by calendars or other weekly or monthly messages carrying high thoughts, forms of prayer, hymns and psalms to be memorized, the church can do much to make those first three years in the lives of its youngest members pure, sweet, holy, decisive of good. No equal space of time in any later period is of more vital importance than those thus spent in the home. There, in that first epitome of the great social whole, the

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

child, taught by love and restraint to take his place and do his part, is already socialized. He is ready, now, to step forth into some larger community and learn, not new lessons, but how to apply those already learned, in the new and larger field.

2. *The Beginners. Ages 4, 5.*

The child who has lived the first three years of his life as a member of the Cradle-roll passes naturally and by promotion to the Beginners' department of the school. Here he is supposed by our schedule to pass the next two years. Now for the first time he learns, as Goethe reminds us, "to look level" instead of "up and down" as he did in the home. For three years he has received, and he has bestowed; his companions have been his parents, whom he must obey, and his playthings and pets, toward which he may at times have shown a tyrannical spirit. It is into another sort of world that he enters when he goes to school, whether it be the week-day Kindergarten or the Beginners' Department of the Church School. In this new world he is now to be made at home and taught how to act.

The first word of this new society into which

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

he has come is love. The second is law. This differs not at all from the right teaching in the home, save that it is now carried over into a larger group, and is applied "level," in Goethe's phrase. Love is larger than it was. It is seen manifested by others than those in the home. It is sung about and talked about. It is the central theme of story and of prayer. The familiar song,

'T is love brings us here,
'T is love brings us here,
Good morning, dear children!
'T is love brings us here—

is the key-note of this department of the school. It matters little what songs are sung, what prayers said, what passages memorized, so only all be saturated with reassuring love.

That is what the child of this age supremely needs. He has made a great adventure in going from the home to the school, even though it be for but one hour in the week. He is still mother's child and probably is content to enter the new circle only as he sees her sitting by and smiling reassuringly. True, he did a far more daring thing when he entered life at the first! But that he did unconsciously. Now, feeling vaguely yet profoundly the mystery of it all,

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

carrying in his perplexed heart the inherited fear of ages of savagery in which the unaccustomed might mean the perilous, he needs that larger reassurance which the strange new society alone can give. Let the songs and the prayers and the stories, then, voice the one message, love!

But restraint is there, too. He is to sit when others sit and because they do, to stand, to walk, to fold hands and close eyes, to speak or sing or remain silent, with others. That he is bidden to do these things is not new, it was so in the home. But a new element has entered, a new word—he knows not the word but makes acquaintance with the thing—*conformity*. Because they do, he must do also. Here is society for the first time laying its hand upon him with authority. He belongs to others, with others. Independence, or that shielded detachment from the world which loving parents provided for him so long, is gone. Grim necessity has laid hold upon him. Society means more than an increased number of people to serve him, it means laws, customs, conventionalities, the sacrifice of his preferences without adequate reason appearing, but because others so will.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

All the more, then, should love prevail in such a scene. Let stories be told of the Divine love as seen in leaf and flower, in fruit and waving grain, in the changing seasons, in the care of dumb animals, in the nurture of little children. And in all such stories let restraint be there as well, not an arbitrary and cruel limitation but love, however disguised: the leaf that is parted from the bough that the bud may grow, the snow-crystal that melts that flowers may bloom, the pleasant summer that fades to make possible the ripened and ingathered harvest. Love in law and through law is here, as in the home, the true discipline. The difference is that now these terms, love and law, have a larger interpretation. The great transition has been made, from the home to the world, but the underlying principle holds, and the child knows that, come what will, love persists and law controls, and these two unite in one Supreme Will. The socializing—the Christianizing—process has been carried one step further.

3. *The Primary Group. Ages 6, 7, 8.*

Pupils in this group are still little children. They live in a world of imagination and make-

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

believe. They do not clearly discern between fact and fiction, but they are beginning to do so. Their play becomes purposeful, but it is still individual, and while they play with others it is mostly by way of rivalry and competition rather than in team-play. Their one outstanding characteristic, however, as we are here concerned with them, is that they now begin to take account of themselves as factors in society. They have passed the unconscious state of the earliest years, they have, it may be, learned in turn the important lesson of submission to the laws, customs and conventions of society. They are now aware that they, too, are makers of laws and customs, and may act as well as be acted upon.

Perhaps the fact that children as a rule start to public school at about six may account for the change that takes place at this time fully as much as anything that occurs in their mental or physical constitution. In any case it marks the beginning of separation from perfect union with home and parents, often to the grief of the latter. It is a little later, as a rule, that open rebellion sometimes breaks forth, but premonitions of it may be noted at this point and the break provided against. Many parents and

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

teachers are at fault here, since they continue to treat primary children as unreasoning beings, whereas they at least wish to be met in a more grown-up fashion. Just because they are now a little harder to understand the teacher should make all the greater effort to understand them, and just because they have ceased to be as lovable as they were they need the more love. Mrs. Cabot is right in saying that children should be loved—at least be shown a loving interest—in proportion as they are unlovely. A new power is entering their lives, a power without which they could never reach a noble manhood and womanhood. Be patient with them, but with an active patience, seizing upon and making use of this fine, new impulse, instead of letting it run riot, carrying with it all the other fine faculties of the soul.

The right lessons for this period are those which tell the children how to live with others, and inspire them to live constructively with their fellows rather than the reverse. Fortunately, they still love stories above all other teaching devices; therefore tell them stories. Narratives of actual happenings in that great world of progressing civilization in which they are beginning to be interested may be mingled

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

in with stories from literature, from myth and legend, and from the world of animal life. Go into the relations of men and the lower creatures. Tell them the legends of St. Francis preaching to the birds and making friends with the wolf of Gubbio. Fill them with stories of the Sir Galahads and the Sir Launfals, until they burn to sally forth to right some wrong and make the world safe for those unable to defend themselves.

By a wise mingling of romance with plain recitals of facts, the quickened impulse may be harnessed to homely deed. The younger brother, who had been regarded as an obstacle, may become the object of chivalrous devotion. The crippled neighbor-child, the blind man, the forlorn widow, may be discovered to provide precisely the right field for a joyful service. It is not necessary and it is not advisable to make these applications of theory to life direct and palpable. Emerson's "new commandment" applies here, as all through our work, "thou shalt not preach." If the teacher should avoid moralizing, the pupils should be forbidden to boast. It is well to encourage them at this stage of their development to observe good deeds and to report them. But it is

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

also important to prevent their narrating any such incident in which they took part. With this limitation, the wise teacher will encourage such narrative and such discussion as will modernize romance and make the pupils see how the very traits that mark the glowing deeds of the past are present in the world of to-day, and may be ruling motives in their own lives.

Children in the primary years are too young for team-work. But it is wisdom here, as all through the course, not only to provide for existing conditions but to anticipate those that are next to follow. It is well, therefore, for the primary teacher to interest the entire class in some helpful enterprise or philanthropy in which, indeed, each one may work independently, but which will serve to show the value of united effort. Entering actively into human society, children of primary years need to be taught, by story and narrative, by precept and by experience, the part they are to play in life. They need to be taught the noble art of living together.

4. *The Junior Group. Ages 9, 10, 11.*

During the years now under consideration, boys and girls complete their childhood and

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

prepare to advance into that vortex of experience known as adolescence. For the time, nature seems to be playing a waiting game. There is generally excellent health in these three years, and but little physical growth. But moral growth, or at least change, is strikingly evident. Freedom and restraint, the impulse and the boundary of life, are now accentuated. The incipient rebelliousness of the primary period is now likely to become rampant. Home ties tend to loosen, and new and often strange allegiances take their place. A love of adventure develops, leading often to wanderings and escapades. History abounds in illustrations of the fact that newly-found freedom tends to run riot. The submissive slaves of yesterday, freed over night, are to-day the terror of the countryside. So the boy or girl who has acquired enough knowledge of the family, school and play-ground to stand no longer in awe of them may become a rebel. The mother cannot understand the sad change that has come over her affectionate, obedient child, who now disputes her statements and perhaps defies her authority. The teacher is equally at a loss to understand why the child who but yesterday seemed so glad to meet and

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

even anticipate her wishes and took pride in getting good lessons, now must be persuaded or coerced. The meaning is not far to seek. The sense of power, of individuality, has arrived, not yet fully but in sufficient degree to introduce into conduct a new element, and with that element we must thenceforth reckon.

Nature, however, has her remedy at hand. Along with the sense of independency goes a new sense of restraint. The "looking level" of the little child just entering society becomes intensified and active, so that now as at no other period of life one's contemporaries bulk with a vast importance. What father or mother or teacher says or thinks may matter very little, but what one's playmates think is of the greatest moment. Team play begins. The success of the group is felt to be of more importance than one's own gain or glory. Societies or "gangs" are formed, of all kinds, from those intended to promote literary taste to those for organized theft. The boy has his hero, his king who does no wrong. This may be one of his own associates or some world figure, but is certainly a man. Every girl has someone to worship, usually but not always some other girl or woman, whose ideals, even whose per-

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

sonal habits, are imitated. Our pupil is not free, then, but has only changed masters. The old standards and disciplines are going, and the new are not yet established. While, therefore, the situation justifies solicitude, it is full of hope.

Children of this age are peculiarly in need of sympathetic guidance. Extraordinary tact is also necessary, since they are in no mood to be reminded that they are being led, still less coerced. When we consider that now for the first time they feel themselves to have entered upon possession of a whole world, we shall not wonder if they stagger a bit and make strange choices. Once catch the idea that even the crudest outbreaks are symptomatic of a spiritual impulse that has suddenly overleaped knowledge and reason, and patience will be given to find and lead them in the right road.

Knowledge of the world is what pupils of this age most need. It is their world now, suddenly theirs. What is it, then, to which they have thus fallen heir? This world of land and sea and atmosphere teems with wonders which are not far to seek. Teach the children to use their eyes and see the marvels that are all about them. Help them to catch

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

glimpses of the interplay of all things and creatures. Tell them how the beavers help, their dams holding back the water; how the earthworms aërate the soil and cause it to be prolific; how the birds keep down worm pests and make the world habitable to man. Read to them Burns' charming poems on the field-mouse and the mountain daisy. Thus may curiosity lead to interest, and this to such awe and reverence as will transform their lust of power into a desire to serve; for they will have seen that force finds its highest expression in helpful coöperation.

Then, since this period marks the advent of hero-worship, biography is especially suggested. The hero at first admired is pretty sure to be someone who has done something. Perhaps to the maturer judgment of the parent or teacher the thing done may not seem to have been especially worth doing, but care should be taken not to disparage too quickly these pseudo-heroes. It is better to enter sympathetically into the junior child's admirations. That will dispose him to enter in turn into equally sympathetic appreciation of heroes of another and a better sort. Let him learn about doers of great things. Provide heroes

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

a-plenty, the more the better. In this way the first step is taken toward a really worthy admiration. Discoverers, inventors, military commanders, athletes, organizers of large business,—if all these are heroes, surely there must be some common quality of heroism that runs through all. What, then, is heroism? What common factor is to be found in the multitude of incidents and adventures? If one who goes to the North or the South Pole is to share his glory with one who sits in his laboratory through successive days and nights until he finds the secret that gives the world a new invention, if one who kills gloriously on the battlefield is seen to be no more truly a hero than another who risks his life to find a serum or antiseptic that will save the life of those wounded by the man of battle, there must be some inner, essential quality that runs through all. Perhaps, then, there may be heroes of science, of art, of literature, of morals, of religion! Perhaps John Wesley was as truly a hero as the Duke of Wellington. We may have to bracket Pasteur with Peary, John Hus with Daniel Boone, Dr. Grenfell with General Foch.

From a perception of the common and spir-

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

itual motive animating heroes in various fields, the elements of heroism may be made to appear. It may be seen that patience is as fine as daring, that deliberation may be as courageous as instant decision, that to suffer and not complain—thus, in Lowell's phrase, "burning your own smoke"—is as heroic in the invalid's bed-chamber as on the battlefield. There are, then, more heroes than one had at first thought. Perhaps there is one in my home? And perhaps I can be one, myself! In such wise the content of the pupils' ideals may be enlarged. Heroism may be made to seem one with religion and religion become heroic. And so the pupil may be led into the living of such a life as he has learned to admire.

5. *The Intermediate Group. Ages 12, 13, 14.*

The twelfth year is a stumbling-block to educators, some adding it to the preceding group, others contending that children of this age belong rather with those older than with those younger. In this or any other case of doubt it is well to grade up rather than down. It is better to incite toward higher attainments than to risk discouragement by holding pupils back too long. Then, the decisive change of

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

life from childhood to adolescence frequently occurs in the twelfth year. This is so grave a crisis that it should be prepared for in any scheme of education. These three years, then, twelve, thirteen and fourteen, are in this discussion united in the Intermediate group, or the period of early adolescence.

This period is a time of surging emotions and epoch-making experiences. The individualism noted as characteristic of the preceding years is still further developed, but it is balanced by a new sense of relationships. It is this latter aspect of the change that has come that is most important. For the relationships that now exist are felt to be more vital, more as though others were directly related to one's self, than was formerly the case. They are not so much drawn toward others as become one with them.

The attainment of sex maturity serves to unite one with the race as no other experience does or can do. The saying that blood is thicker than water carries a large meaning. It is not alone physical bodies that are bound by this vital cord, it is minds, hearts, interests, purposes, wills that are blood-related. The arrival of, even the bodily preparation for, the

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

procreative power wakens the emotions and brings a sense of kinship that reaches far and becomes a dominant force in life. Kin and kind are from the same root, and are historically united. Love is now the ruling passion. It may show itself in passing fancies, in blind adorations, but it also leads to noble purposes of self-effacing service.

Cosmic love, then, is the key word in the Intermediate period. The young people yearn for companionship and reach out for new ties. Genealogies begin to have a new meaning. Family and tribal connections are looked up, and distant relationships traced. Then is the time to set the young people in right relations to their inheritances. Moreover, since this is a time of storm and stress, they need the steady influence of an age-view, such as history offers. We will teach them history, then, especially religious history. And since our religious history, particularly in its earliest beginnings and in its mightiest climax, is set forth in sublime literature—the books of the Old and the New Testament—we have at hand the choicest material known for the accomplishment of our purpose.

During the three years of this Intermediate

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

period the Bible and Christian history should be presented. The first year may well be given to the Old Testament, the second to the Life of Jesus, and the third to the Acts and the early history of Christianity. To the obvious objection that three years are all too few in which to cover so vast a theme, several rejoinders are to be made. One is that all through preceding years the Bible is supposed to have been used, so that its principal stories and its great passages are already familiar. What is now urged is such a bold and comprehensive review of the whole as will give a unified impression. Again, taking up Bible study thus at a definite time and for a short period is likely to leave on the minds of the pupils a more vivid as well as a more agreeable impression of the Scriptures than is gained when these are presented with inflexible persistency throughout the whole of school life. While as for church history, it is so vast a subject and so complex that only its salient features can or should be presented. And finally it will be noted that, a little later on, our scheme contemplates a return to these themes, when, with the preliminary survey as a foundation, and with matured intellectual powers, a more careful study can be made.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

It is interesting to note that in this plan of passing over to adolescents the substance of our religious inheritance, we are following an age-long precedent. From the most primitive times, so far back as records or traditions go, it has been customary to initiate youths of this age into the secret traditions of their tribes. The fact that the impulse to religious consecration does not come at fullest tide at this period with our young people may mean that with the growing complexity of life childhood has lengthened. But while religious maturity may with us be a little delayed, race-maturity arrives, coinciding with and vitally related to individual sex-maturity. We will not, then, work for religious decisions and life-consecrations at this time. If they come, well and good; but they arrive more naturally in the next period. For these years our plan contemplates a swift and somewhat strenuous sweep of a long period and a vast literature.

How admirably the material fits into our plans! At the first, with pupils still in the hero-worshipping age and keen for stirring events and virile characters, there is the world's greatest story-book, the Old Testament. Heroes are there, some good and some bad. Even

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

those traditionally accounted good may find sharp critics among our pupils. So much the better. Rather an occasional error in judgment and an unjust condemnation than sluggish acceptance of all as good, merely because found in the Bible. Withal, they will find there a mighty, surging tribal life, lifting itself out of barbarism into a high civilization, out of idolatries into the purest of faiths. And in all it will be noted that the moving and lifting agency is none other than a fine religious idealism. Not the warriors or the kings but the statesmen-like prophets of Israel are the true heroes of the Old Testament. They won for their people and for us as well a glorious religious inheritance.

A year is long enough to give at one time to the study of the history and literature of Israel. From this we pass to a year's study of the life of Jesus, bringing the world's greatest character into the pupil's life at the moment of the greatest crisis in personal development. The world, just then, seems most alive. Heroes are most idealized. Admirations are at their keenest edge. To the life, the heart, the soul thus prepared, the story of Jesus appeals with power. The pathos, the tragedy, the glorious

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

humanity of it all, the glints of humor that come here and there if we have the wit to recognize them, all play powerfully on the heartstrings of the youth of thirteen.

It is good to dwell in this realm of high privilege and, like the disciples, we may long to build tabernacles and remain there. But life moves on, and so does the sacred story. Jesus lived in his disciples as well as in himself. What became of them? How did they behave when he was taken from them? And how did that great impulse which came from his personality and teaching solidify into the Christian church? These questions lead to a study of the Acts of the Apostles, and of those other forces which came in to swell the current, even to help cut its channel: Roman method, and Greek philosophy, and Oriental mysticism. All the more, then, does our religion as it has come down to us, embody vast world-movements, dominated and refined by the spirit and teachings of Jesus.

Thus may the studies proposed for these crucial years meet and master the turbulent, revolutionizing experiences of adolescence and guide our young people safely through dangers to assured faith, through perturbations of spirit to a haven of peace.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

6. *The Senior Group. Ages 15, 16, 17.*

These are the years of life decisions. The immediate, personal crisis past, by which the boy or girl has become a man or woman, thereby leaving isolated individualism and entering upon the common racial experience, the time has come to find one's self, to take one's destined place in the scheme of things. But where? What trade or profession, what means of gaining a livelihood or showing one's self a real person, is to be chosen? Our pupils at this period are all too likely to cease being pupils at all, and, all unprepared as they are, go forth into life, their very ignorance beguiling them. Public school pupils as well as those in the church school become restless at this point and drop out of the ranks of learners, taking up their life tasks.

The church school has here an advantage that the secular school does not have. Economic pressure often, unhappily, seems to require young people of this period to abandon their studies in order to aid in the family support. But as the church school is held on a day on which gainful labor is not general, they may

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

still remain in our classes, and will if we meet them fairly in the realm in which they now live. Since getting hold of life is now their supreme interest, our task is to lay aside all else and bend our efforts to help them to do precisely that. And here, as in preceding situations, our task is two-fold,—to inform them and to inspire them.

Once more, then, they will want to know something about the world into which, in a new way, they are now entering. They are in no mood to study that world as the scene of God's protecting love, as they did at the first, nor solely as the arena of mighty cosmic forces, as they did at a later period. It is the workaday world that now interests them, the enterprises of those who carry on the business of society, the nature and the laws of the various human relationships. Obviously, the teacher of religion cannot and need not go into the details of occupations. We are not to teach our pupils how to plow and sow, to build houses and to manufacture shoes. But we can and we must show them the finer spiritual significance of human occupations. We must emphasize again the idea of living together, not, now, merely as

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

social beings who ought to get on happily with others, but as active personalities, each having a part to do, living with and for others.

What is my part in the world? How can I really get hold of the great problems of human society? What is the meaning of a town, a city, state, nation? What relation does the thing I do bear to what another does? What are my rights, and my responsibilities? Should a lawyer plead a cause he knows is not right? Or a merchant allow a customer to buy what is not all-wool? Or a politician permit his constituents to believe what is not true in order that he may be reëlected? These, and such as these, are the questions young people are asking, and in the problems thus suggested it is the duty of the teacher of religion to give what aid he can.

Our part in the world, then, is the first topic that demands attention in this period. This may well be presented at first in a series of lessons that bring out the great mass of facts, customs and moral codes one must know in order to enter intelligently upon any life career. Following this, or commingled with it, exercises in making those "hypothetical decisions" that Dr. Adler regards as of so high value,

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

may be given. Actual happenings in the great world of business and politics may be narrated, at first those involving simple moral considerations, and later those where decisions are difficult, perhaps even impossible, so that our pupils shall see how eternal principles are actively present in even the slightest of our acts, may see, also, how unwise are hasty judgments, especially hasty condemnations.

But to know is not enough; to will is also requisite to the good life. Fortunately, nature works with us here, since fine impulses are native to the adolescent boy or girl. But impulse is a tender plant, easily smothered and dwarfed by the hot breath of passion or the chilling atmosphere of cynicism. The surging blood within may impel toward lowered ideals, and the sneering comments of those who have themselves missed the higher way makes the descent the more easy. It is the fine task of the teacher of religion to cherish the nobler impulses, guarding them if they are still warm, reviving them if they have become inert. The youth of this period must be strangely hardened who is not responsive to the call of the higher life.

In approaching so delicate and highly per-

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

sonal a subject as this, the indirect method may best be employed, especially at the beginning. Teach, first, the heroisms of business, through such fiction as John Halifax, or such biography as that of Roger Wolcott or the younger Baldwin. Then point out the idealism that operates so powerfully in world movements,—how Runnymede, and the American Revolution, and the Emancipation of Slaves are spiritual happenings, as truly as the Protestant Reformation or the self-dedication of the Covenanters. Acquaint them, also, with the noble history of their church, the wisdom, the endurance, the heroism and the high ideals of their spiritual ancestors. Place in their hands or read with them some of the trumpet calls in which literature abounds, both prose and poetry. To these narratives and high utterances, and to the contagious enthusiasm of a leader whose life is worthy and whose heart thrills with the higher impulses, the youths will respond as friend answereth friend.

There may come—let us hope that there will surely come—the sacred moment when the latent aspirations of generous youth will no longer be restrained, but will burst through all reserves and become the dominating power.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

Self-dedication is as natural as life to the adolescent. The great decision is not for others to hasten or to delay. Give it room; prepare the way; provide the atmosphere; God and the aspiring soul must work out the great drama. But when this happens, it is not merely that the individual is happy or is made secure. It is, rather, that the last barrier of exclusiveness is broken down. The life of separateness is at an end. The larger individuality is now awake and active. The person has become one with other persons, with God and his world. He is socialized; he is Christianized. Henceforth there is the task—the endless task as we joyfully believe—of progress in understanding and in skill, but life's great affirmation has been made, and our pupil has become an apostle of all that is high.

7. *The Advanced Group. Ages 18, 19, 20.*

The three years assigned to this division of the church school might be extended almost indefinitely. The pupils here enter what is in a very real sense the final stage of their development. Progress is still to be made, and should be sought for throughout life. But it is thenceforth not so rapid or so dramatic as in

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

the earlier years, and is least in that realm in which we are directly interested. Morally—or, as we are here saying, socially—our pupils have arrived at maturity. Further gains will be made, but they will be chiefly in a fuller knowledge and skill. The vague ideas of childhood, vitalized but yet left confused by the emotional surge of adolescence, need clarifying, and the eager purposes of youth need guiding into right channels and within reasonable bounds.

It is to an intellectual task that we are thus invited, having, however, a distinctly moral purpose. Our pupils have passed through a general training, and are now to resurvey the field over which they have progressed, and learn how to apply their acquirements to life tasks. The Advanced Department of a church school is to the organization as a whole what a law, medical or theological school is to a university. Students have gone far enough to have mastered the rudiments, and now need to gather up their general knowledge, acquire more knowledge of the specialized work to which they are thenceforth to devote themselves, and make direct and practical applica-

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

tion of it all to the problems they go forth to face.

For one thing, students in this division may well study the Bible. They are presumably familiar with its stories, know by heart many of its fine passages, and have a general idea of its contents and the sweep of history out of which it grew. What they now need is a more accurate and detailed knowledge, including such matters as are covered in the history of ancient texts, the problem of authorship and original sources, the history of interpretation and the main laws of exegesis. How did we get our English Bible? How did the Hebrews get their canon, including just the books now in the Old Testament? And how did the Greek books included in the New Testament get adopted as the peculiar Scriptures of Christians? Should any part of the whole book be regarded as of greater evidential value than any other, and if so on what grounds? And is the Bible to be taken as evidence or as final authority? To clarify the mind on such matters is to escape many perplexing difficulties later on, and to come to a new and more helpful appreciation of this great book.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

Another topic for careful study might well be the rights and duties of citizens of a republic. This, again, is a subject already provided for in an earlier group, but is here to be taken up more thoroughly. A brief history of ethics would be both illuminating and inspiring. Older classes under competent leadership would be greatly benefited by a reading of Plato's *Republic*, or Aristotle's *Ethics*, while a study of the history of commerce, or socialism, or the single tax, or any of the many sociological problems would be stimulating. The world needs leaders in all helpful enterprises, men and women who know the facts with which these enterprises are involved, and can guide others through the pitfalls and bypaths that have been the ruin of so many good purposes. Enthusiasm is good, is indeed necessary, but enthusiasm unregulated and undirected by knowledge and good judgment is dangerous. And where, better than in the Advanced Department of the school of the church, can such knowledge and judgment, as well as the necessary enthusiasm, be gained?

The main interest, however, here as all through the course, is religion. That is one thing all peoples have, and it is the supremely

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

socializing agency. Religion itself comes by contagion, or is at least so stimulated into action. But like any other powerful agency religion is delivered from being a menace and is made productive of good by knowledge of its nature and use. One needs to know the history of his own church with some fullness. But it may be equally enlightening, possibly even more stimulating, to study also the history of some other religious body. Ignorance is the mother of sectarian hate. To know other forms of religion as they are viewed by their own adherents is to warm the heart to sympathy. This applies to the sects within Christianity. It also applies to the great faiths of the world, of which Christianity is one.

The science of Comparative Religion is of recent origin, yet it has flooded the world with a new light. The material now available to all, provided by the very faiths that were once regarded as wholly devilish, is seen to be not only worthy of a place beside that of Hebrew and Christian writings, but to be animated by the same great underlying impulses. Back of religions is religion, and each is appreciated and the whole is apprehended through sympathy. Let our advanced group, then, study

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

these great faiths, not to catalogue their peculiarities or to refute their errors but to understand them, to appreciate them, and through such appreciative understanding to find that which animates them all, a yearning of the heart of man for the highest things, and for that unity which is found only in our larger selves, the life of the soul.

Thus, or in some such way, it is the privilege of the teacher of religion to lead human souls through infancy, childhood and youth to manhood and womanhood, rationally, wholesomely, progressively. The methods vary from age to age, the topics are many, but the purpose is the same throughout. The helpless waif that drifts unknowingly into this vast complex of life is to be welcomed, shown the value and the limitations of freedom, taught conformity without sacrificing spontaneity, led to know the world and reverence it, clarified in his loyalties, endowed with our common religious heritage in history and literature, saved from the loss of native idealism, enlisted in the army of the servants of God and his people, and instructed in the larger truths and principles through which life may be made worthy.

A SUGGESTED CURRICULUM

And all through, the unifying purpose is to socialize the individuals, bringing all, whatever their limitations and capacities, into one coöperative whole, whose bond of fellowship is mutual understanding, whose animating principle is love, and whose unity is at last that of sons and daughters of one Father, the Living God.

CHAPTER IV

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

Religious education is in large degree the peculiar responsibility of the clergy. It is unfortunately true that in all too many instances ministers are either unacquainted with the principles and methods of religious education, or indifferent to its importance, or both. It is also true that even under the best ministerial leadership the greater part of such work is necessarily done by laymen and lay women. Nevertheless, it is the minister's knowledge or ignorance, his zeal or indifference, that determines, more than any other factor, what is to be the kind and amount of religious guidance given in any parish. It follows that among obligations resting upon the church there is none more pressing in importance than that those who are being prepared for the work of the ministry be so prepared that when they go to their waiting charges they shall be able to assume leadership in this most important enterprise.

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

The rise of religious education to a foremost place in the estimation of leaders of thought in the various denominations has led to the inclusion of chairs of pedagogy in many theological schools, and to the offering of definite courses in the art of religious instruction. Gratifying as this is, it is unfortunately true that the movement has not yet reached all theological seminaries, and that in those which have taken forward steps in this direction there is still plentiful lack of appreciation of the new demand for leadership that has arisen. Schools of all kinds are apt to be conservative, and respond somewhat slowly to new conditions. But the age is insistent in its demands and will surely make itself heard in all schools for the training of ministers. It is not merely some superficial instruction in the art of organizing and conducting a church school that is needed. The whole emphasis in religion is being changed, the public mind refusing to content itself with traditional teaching and demanding the presentation of religion in a new form. To meet this new demand there is necessary a new emphasis in the preparation for the work of the ministry.

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

So long as religion was regarded as a supernatural force operating on the lives and destinies of men, its administration demanded primarily and almost solely a class of men set apart as priests, duly authorized to perform the sacred functions. When, in turn, religion was regarded as interwoven with and at every point dependent upon a revealed system of theology, the church required a ministry of certified learning in the theological disciplines. But as religion becomes identified with life, is seen to be man's whole-hearted response to the situation in which he finds himself, neither formal initiation into sacerdotal rank nor the attainment of theological learning will suffice. What the world looks for today in the religious leader, and what the church is slowly but certainly coming to demand of its ministers is not, indeed, less of spiritual elevation or of sound learning, but knowledge of life, sympathetic interest in world-movements, and above all, men who can develop and strengthen character. The spread of culture, the general acceptance of the teachings of science, the growing demands of business, and the new sense of freedom from traditions which has not so much grown as burst upon the world, have

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

brought the church to a crisis such as it has hitherto never faced. To meet this crisis by preparing men to fulfill the ministry of the new church of the new age, this, and not the traditional training of preaching theologians, is the task of the theological schools today.

To meet this new responsibility perhaps the first essential is that the theological schools become thoroughly socialized. For if preachers of religion are to become promoters of religion, and if religion be essentially a sympathetic understanding of and coöperation with God and man, then the whole atmosphere of the theological school must be such as will lead the students to yearn toward rather than withdraw from the men and the movements with which they are surrounded. No room here for pride of learning, for conceit of orthodoxy, for aloofness from the everyday world and commonplace people of actual experience. The urgent cry is for human ministers who know and can sympathize, to whom the sorrows, the perplexities, the temptations of real men and women can be carried with assurance of understanding and helpful response. If such comprehending sympathy can be won through books and lectures, so be it. But if it be neces-

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

sary, in order to gain this power, to dig in the fields, or sell goods over the counter, or organize ball clubs in the neighborhood, or teach English to foreign workmen, or preach the gospel in schoolhouses and upon the corners of the streets, let these be done, and let such activities be regarded as equally essential with the traditional courses of study. Let it be so clearly perceived that the first and essential equipment of a successful minister is that he be sympathetically drawn to others, yearning to enter helpfully into their lives, that whatever else the student may gain he shall not miss such activities and training as will develop in him precisely these qualities. And before he is certified by the theological faculty as a competent religious leader of men, let it be required not only that he shall have attained sound theological learning but that he shall have demonstrated by actual service that he truly loves his fellow-men and has power to lead them on the upward path.

1. *The Study of Psychology.*

Turning to the intellectual training of such a leader, it is apparent that the first essential in his equipment is a knowledge of human na-

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

ture, and of the life into which that human nature is to fit. The study of psychology, which only a generation ago was one of the elegant accessories of a liberal education, curious, interesting, even inspiring, has now become of central importance. Passing through various stages, speculative, experimental, physiological, genetic, the science of psychology finds upon its hands no less vast a problem than the reading of the complex scroll of human life. The question, How can men teach who do not know the subject to be taught? gives place to the larger question, How can they teach without knowing the persons to be taught? How, for that matter, can one influence others, not only in teaching, but in moral reforms, or in religious evangelism, unless he knows those whom he would move? This knowledge comes, indeed, very largely through such activities as we have been describing as contributory toward the equipment of a leader. But there should be more than a rule-of-thumb knowledge; psychology, as it is presented today in the best books and by the most highly trained teachers, dealing with developing intelligence and experience and applied to the actual problems faced in life, should be a

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

foremost study in all training schools for the ministry.

Especially important is the study of genetic psychology, or the unfolding of child life. The minister, going forth to take up his new work, is met at the threshold with the problem of the church school. How shall it be organized? Who are the right teachers for pupils of various ages, and what is the best course of instruction to be followed? Above all, what is the final purpose of the school's activity, and how are parents and teachers to be so enlightened and awakened that they will move intelligently toward that end? Parents, too, will challenge the minister with eager questions as to the right course for them to pursue with regard to the guidance of their children,—docile or wayward, precocious or dull, virile or of flabby will. To be unprepared to meet these needs is to fail where failure is most disastrous. The minister goes forth to serve humanity, and finds in precisely these instances his richest field of service. His success is to be determined by his ability to guide developing character, and here, in the children of his parish, are men and women in the making, plastic, open to sugges-

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

tion and retentive of impressions. Moreover, from year to year they change, needing now this now that instruction and incentive, greatly furthered on their way to nobility of manhood and womanhood if the right instruction or incentive comes at the appropriate time, equally retarded or harmed if it comes at the wrong time or not at all. Whether the failure to meet this situation adequately be his or that of the school in which he was supposedly trained for his task, it is a failure of so great magnitude as to rank as a calamity.

An essential feature in the study of psychology is that it be pursued in what we are here calling the social spirit. It must be more than a gathering of idiosyncrasies, more than a tracing of parallelisms between mental and physiological processes, more than speculations upon and formulations of theories of soul-action. Moral evaluations enter at every point and should dominate all inquiries. Valuable as purely speculative and experimental investigation is, this should be carried on mainly by those whose peculiar field is exploration. He who is preparing to become a leader of men may well have a keen interest in all such efforts

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

of the specialists and must be able to understand their findings, but his own interest is rather in the application of established principles to the influencing of men and women and children in right ways.

The test of a course in psychology in a training school for the ministry is that it send forth men who appreciate the complexity of the human soul, who know that satisfactory results will follow effort in proportion to the wisdom with which that effort is applied to those whom they seek to affect; men who know how the intellect, the emotions and the will unfold through succeeding years of life, and so can fit instruction to ability and need as these change from year to year; men who know when to be eager and intense and when to be patient, when to sow and when to reap. For the preacher of the word goes forth to help his fellow-men to become what but for him they might not become. It is his to look upon character not as fixed but as fluid, and therefore capable of being affected for good or ill; even more, it is his to see character as a living growth, to be fostered and guided. In such an understanding of life, science joins with experience; but the animating spirit is love.

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

2. *Teaching the Bible.*

It is probably true that no book has been so much taught, so thoroughly taught, and often so badly taught, as the Bible. It holds a foremost place in Protestant theological schools. To know it well has been the goal of many a student's efforts. In nearly all theological schools, until comparatively recent times, adequate knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments has been held to require an ability to read these documents in their original languages. So, thousands of aspirants to the ministry have been compelled to labor painfully over their Hebrew and Greek, coming at last, it may be, to a limited ability to dig out a meaning already known from some Scripture text. Among those who have thus studied are some who have really mastered the languages, have come to that fulness of knowledge wherein is delight, and have entered upon the rare privilege of reading the thoughts of the authors in the very idioms in which they wrote.

No words can express adequately our debt to Biblical scholars of the first order, many of whom have risen from the ranks of theological students. Without their researches we should

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

be immeasurably poorer than we are. But our joy in their achievement is clouded by our sympathy for the hundreds, perhaps thousands, who have wasted priceless years in an effort foredoomed to failure, striving to reach a goal of recognized worth by an impossible route, while the open way they might have taken has been untrod. No one really knows a subject, a wise man said, until he can play with it. Languages are easily mastered by some but are practically impossible to others. Why, then, imagine that it is only, or even mainly, by the language-route that the Bible is to be mastered?

Equally futile, perhaps worse in its consequences, is the effort to understand the Bible controversially. To approach it with preconceived notions, and for the purpose of finding documentary proof for settled opinions, is to miss utterly the greatest good the Bible can do for us. This effort is futile because the Bible is so varied, represents so many points of view, and provides such ready proof-texts for opinions widely different from each other, that such an approach makes it impossible for the student to see the whole as a thing of life, and to feel its throbbing power in his own soul. A

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

text, some one has said, that is small enough to use as a missile is too small to serve as a foundation stone. Moreover, the very effort to bolster up one's sectarian theories by Scripture texts intensifies the sense of separateness and makes the student all the more narrow and unfriendly. Thus the holiest and friendliest of books is forced to become the instrument of unholiness and strife, and the Scriptures are searched in vain. The very record of man's strivings for God, strivings in which more than in any other human endeavor we find the ground of his common sonship, is used for purposes of controversy, separateness, bigotry and spiritual isolation.

The right approach to the Bible is what we have been calling the social approach. If a study of the original languages can help in this effort, let that method be used, but let not that or any other custom bar the way against the inquiring soul. The social study of the Bible leads one to know the authors and the characters described as contemporaries of the spirit; to sympathize with them in their strivings after fuller knowledge of God and human duty. For most students this will mean that the Bible is read as well as studied,—read in great

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

sweeps, a book at a sitting, so that each author's outlook on life will be grasped as a whole. The times in which the writers lived, the opinions then current, the field of knowledge then explored, the political, climatic, social and racial influences at play will be considered. In a word, the effort will be to clasp hands with each author, to go with him among the people and the ideas he presents as among friends, and to feel the human throb that pulses throughout his ancient message. One has not learned the Scriptures properly or well until he has lived again the life of the Elohist and the Deuteronomist, of prophet and legalist, of the writers of the Epistles and the narrators of the life of Jesus.

To read the Bible as one would read Plato or Shakespeare, and in whatever language, whatever version will best place the reader beside the author, heart beating with heart; to suffer with the anxieties and exult in the triumphs of the writers and those for whom they wrote; to share their longings for truth, for holiness, for God: to appreciate by acute sympathetic imagination even their imperfect apprehensions of Deity; to know them as one knows his friend

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

who kneels and walks and labors beside him, is to fit one's self to understand

Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

3. *Teaching Church History.*

One cannot well belong to the church universal without belonging to some one of its parts. And one cannot well be loyal to the larger whole who is not first true to the smaller group in which by birth or choice he finds himself. Man's loyalties are so constituted that they grow normally from the lesser to the greater. In religion, one must perforce be a sectarian; he must love intensely somewhere as a necessary prerequisite to loving genuinely everywhere. Even in attaining the goal of universal sympathy and understanding, one does not necessarily or even safely let go the original and lesser attachment. It is not by despising one's birthright church but by appreciating the church universal, of which his home church is a part, that true breadth is reached.

The method of teaching the history of the

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

church, therefore, should be that which minimizes neither one's own sect nor any other, but sees them all as parts of a greater unity. Evidently, then, the dogmatic attitude is here as evil and as futile as it is in the study of the Bible. The student who begins the study of a sect with the conviction already formed that that sect is wholly wrong in its views, and for the purpose of antagonizing it more effectively, will never come to any real understanding of it. No church, and no man, is to be understood through its or his limitations. Our larger selves are our real selves; and to try to know the whole by a part—and that a negative part—is to invite failure.

Samuel Johnson said that every conversation is an intellectual battle, each man striving to establish his own views and beat down those of others. Some conversation, his, for example, is properly to be so described. But every thoughtful person knows that battle-talk is not convincing, darkens counsel, opens no doors into infinite truth. But there is a higher conversation wherein men strive with and not against each other, and so strive for truth rather than for mastery. The same is true of trade. There is much of cut-throat

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

competition, wherein each competitor seeks his own gain regardless of the gain of others, sometimes directly through the ruin of others. The Japanese have a proverb to the effect that trade is a battle in which the victor is always defeated. It is only hard, relentless competition, however, of which this is true. Most business men in times of stress, and the really large-minded traders at all times, recognize the unity of commercial interests: that no man can really gain or lose alone, and that the real basis of prosperity is not this man's gain or that man's loss, that it is not even all men's gain, but that it is good-will, mutual confidence, coöperative effort. Men are fundamentally one, bound by ties that are more and stronger than the antagonisms that would separate them. Thus they understand each other and ascend in knowledge, and thus they work together and increase in wealth, by coöperation, by unity in the deepest and largest and highest things.

So it is in the history of the church. The controversies of sects have indeed been many, and their story stands out assertively from the records of religious movements. There has been the battle and the cry of those who strive for mastery. But progress in religion has

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

come by other methods. It has come through the efforts of those who put truth above sect, who have looked upon even antagonists as fellow-seekers of the light, and who have so loved the revelation of God that they have sought for it everywhere and bowed before it always. It is the constructive thinkers, the seekers after light, the lovers of men, who have been the true evangelists of God's word, the real builders of the church.

It is precisely this view of the church that the teacher of religious history is privileged to take. It is his to view the drama of religion as a whole, to see the good even in the narrowness of men and of creeds, and to trace the common purpose in all religious movements, that of finding God and thus finding the key to human duty and human destiny.

O the blest eyes, the happy hearts
That see, that know the guiding thread so fine,
Along the mighty labyrinth.

So to apprehend and teach religious history is to cultivate in those taught the constructive habit of mind, to kindle the kindly affections toward all inquirers, to promote the spirit of patience with imperfect views and untrained

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

thinkers, in a word, to socialize those who are to go forth as apostles of the Prince of Peace.

4. *Teaching Theology.*

In this vast field we find, once more, wide differences of view, often antagonistic and irreconcilable. So it is that teachers of theology have not always escaped the controversial method, some even regarding it as essential. Two considerations, however, should lead us to prefer the irenic and constructive rather than the critical and militant method of approach. One is, that the subject matter is the highest the mind of man is able to grasp. Students in this field dwell as upon the mountain tops, in the full light and the pure air of abstract truth and universal ideas. The other is, that by the very terms of the study final conclusions are impossible, since it is the action of finite mind attempting to grasp the infinite, while the vehicle of such inquiry, human language, comes to the student all saturated with metaphors of the lower and sensual world.

When, under these conditions, men lose their tempers or engage in a battle whose sole purpose is individual or sectarian mastery, the incongruity of method and material is painfully

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

apparent. One need not adopt the cynical attitude of Omar, feeling that all such effort is vain since we ever come out again at the very door by which we entered, nor even that passing emotion of self-contempt which Emerson expressed, as, coming forth from the Transcendental meeting, he seemed to hear Nature saying, "So hot? my little Sir." Man, contemplating the Infinite, partaker of the Infinity he adores, rises above himself and is worthy of reverence. And that teacher of teachers who can lead his pupils so to know the great seekers after God that they who hear him will learn to reverence them, has successfully inducted his followers into that holy place where they abide who have partly known and wholly desired the Infinite.

Is there not something suggestive in the testimony of many of the great men and women of the church, to the effect that as they have advanced in years their creeds have become shorter and kindlier? So many testimonies, all of practically the same tenor, seem to indicate that as experience broadens and life ripens controversial theology loses its sway, sympathy is felt with points of view which in seminary days had been anathema,

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

and a new vision of God's manifold revelation has been given. It is no discredit to teachers and systems of theology to say that there are other avenues to the knowledge of God, that as Scripture and metaphysics are born out of human experience, that very experience has yet other revelations to him who meets it with warm heart and open mind. The sympathetic study of living men and women and little children constitutes a theological discipline of the highest value. And from this discipline we learn, what the systems of the schools do not always teach, that to know God one must know His works and His children, and that to know these one must first love them. Hence it is that the gate of entrance to even this queen of the sciences is that same sympathy through which we gain entrance to all that is good. The theologian who teaches not in love teaches not at all.

Surveying the curriculum as a whole, it appears that every special discipline is a channel through which universal insight may be reached. But the condition of reaching this goal is that the approach be sympathetic. Perhaps it may be well to add that in every

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

study there is a technical method that directly aids in the promotion of that human interest out of which sympathetic understanding grows. This is the method of studying a subject in its relationships. To indicate this has been the effort all through; but it may be well to restate it. If psychology is studied historically, in its slow emergence from curious and furtive inquiries to its present stage of development; if the Bible be associated not only with the history of the people and movements out of which it grew but regarded as one example of an age-long and world-wide impulse to see God and repeat to others the heavenly messages; if the history of the church be treated as part of general history, the whole seen as the progress of mankind; if theology takes up into itself all human experience of divine things, modern as well as ancient, each of these subjects will, without loss of its own distinctive outlines, be made to fit into that whole human struggle toward the light wherein men are at their best and are most truly one.

The method commended is that of synthesis rather than of analysis. One needs to see things clearly, but one also needs to see them whole, that is, in their relations. And the de-

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

fect of much teaching is that it is too segregated, too restricted. There is always need of specialists, highly trained in their respective fields. But the world needs most men of all-round culture and wide interests. Especially does the church need for its ministry men of wide culture rather than specialists in any field of learning. And since ministers of the Gospel are privileged more than most of their fellows to lead a life of intellectual activity, the theological school should aim to provide a wide sweep of general information as well as to develop a power and habit of sympathetic appreciation, the two forming a framework into which subsequent studies may be fitted. By creating the social atmosphere in the school and leading the students to undertake helpful human enterprises, and by the wise choice and right presentation of class-room studies, students of theology may be transformed into true ministers of the Gospel, preachers of religion may become promoters of religion, and human sympathy, one with the Divine Love, may be increased.

The whole of life is an educative process. Whether we will or no, from infancy to age

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

we learn. Home gives place to school and school to surging life; parents are replaced by teachers, and these by the experiences of labor and rest, of success and defeat, of joy and sorrow and love and pain. But all the time education goes on, under the same supreme Master, God. He does not hurl us into the world, leave us to stand or fall as may chance, and then, judging us from another sphere, crown us or curse us as He will. Rather, He, the Teacher of men, calls us, draws us, guides us ever on the way that leads to light. And the means of His education of the human race are those innumerable relationships that bind the atom to the star and make of one all the nations of the earth.

To teach, that is the supreme calling. Higher work or holier no man ever did. The supreme personalities of the ages have been teachers. To quicken curiosity and provide means for its satisfaction; to make virtue alluring, commanding; to provide growing personalities with those noble ideas and stimulating ideals that will become fixed in them as character; to open up treasures of knowledge and wisdom, making possible a lifetime of joyful progress; to awaken such desires for greatness

THE MINISTER'S PREPARATION

of soul that narrowness and conceit are done away and self-pity and despair are made impossible; above all, to know one's self, in doing these things, to be channels of the Divine Power, "pipes through which the breath of Pan doth blow a momentary music," doing the greatest work of the Supreme Teacher,—this is the highest and holiest privilege vouchsafed to mankind.

THE END

The following statement and sketch of the author are here given in accordance with the requirement of the Meadville Theological School.

This Dissertation was presented to the Meadville Theological School, in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Theology, and was passed upon favorably by the following committees:

For the FacultyProfessor Clayton R. Bowen,
Professor Anna Garlin Spencer,
Professor Robert J. Hutcheon.

For the Board of Trustees...The Reverend Robert S. Loring,
The Reverend Charles E. Park,
The Reverend Lewis G. Wilson.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Faculty, the Board of Trustees conferred the degree of Doctor of Theology upon Mr. Lawrance on September 20, 1917.

WALTER C. GREEN,
Secretary of the Board of Trustees.

Sketch of the Author.

William Irvin Lawrance, son of Elonson and Amanda (Irvin) Lawrance, was born in Winchester, Ohio, March 3, 1853. Educated in the public schools of Yellow Springs, Ohio, and in Antioch College, receiving from the latter the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Married, 1875, Caroline, daughter of Henry Thomas and Nancy (Wales) Butterworth, of Butterworths, Ohio. Ordained as minister in the Christian Connection, 1875, serving as pastor in West Dayton, Bellefontaine and West Liberty. In 1880-1 Chaplain and Superintendent of Instruction, Ohio Reform School, and in 1881-2 Acting President of Miami Valley College (Friends' School), Springboro, Ohio. Entered Harvard Divinity School 1882, graduating as Bachelor of Sacred Theology in 1885, entering at the same time the Unitarian ministry. Minister Third Religious Society, Dorchester, Mass., 1885-1891; Associate Director Unitarian Mission in Japan, 1891-1894; Minister Independent Congregational Church, Meadville, Pa., 1895-1899; and of the Winchester, Mass., Unitarian Church, 1899-1910. In 1910 elected President of the Unitarian Sunday School Society, and in 1912 appointed Secretary of the Department of Religious Education of the American Unitarian Association, holding both offices at the present time. Since 1916, Secretary of the Council of the Religious Education Association. Awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology by the Meadville Theological School, September 20, 1917. Present address, Auburndale, Mass.

268.01 L424S c.1

Lawrance # The social
emphasis in religious edu

OISE



3 0005 02065312 0

268.01

L424S

Lawrance

The social emphasis in re-
ligious education

268.01

L424S

Lawrance

The social emphasis in religious
education_

